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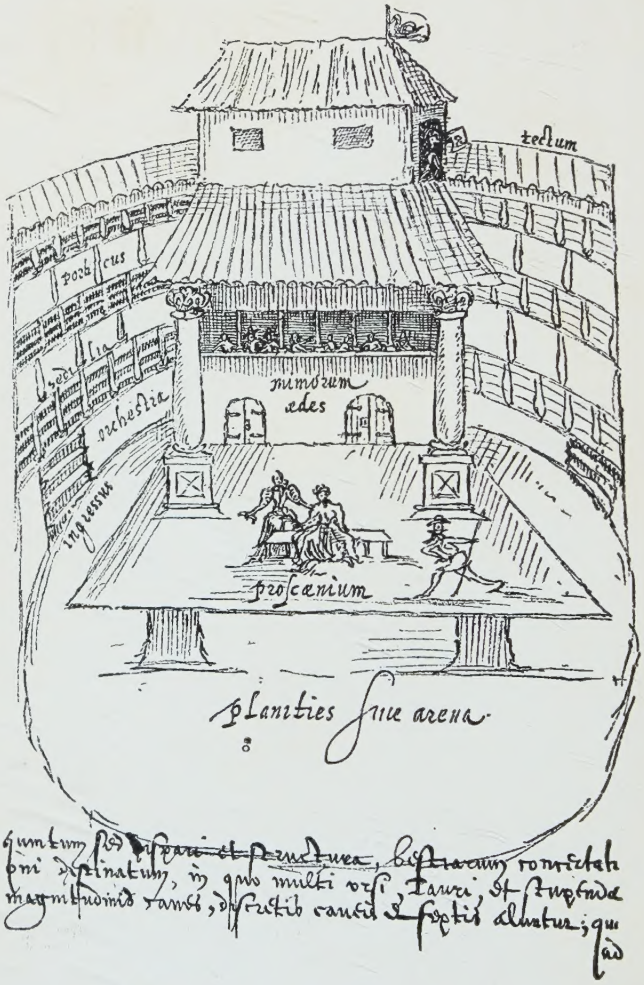

INTERIOR OF THE SWAN THEATRE, *ca.* 1596

Correct facsimile of the De Witt-Van Buchell sketch preserved at Utrecht

THE TUDOR DRAMA

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH NATIONAL DRAMA TO THE RETIREMENT OF SHAKESPEARE

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PREFACE

THE following pages have grown out of a series of lectures on "The Sources of the Elizabethan Drama," given in 1908 at Magdalen College, Oxford. To the members of that society are due the author's grateful acknowledgments for stimulus and opportunity. In the present volume very few words remain as they were first written. The scope of the book has been considerably broadened and its commencement pushed back beyond the reign of Elizabeth. It is believed, however, that the point of view expressed in the title of the lectures has been retained, and it is hoped that the original aim of tracing the genesis and development of the various types of Tudor drama will be found still to justify the method of treatment.

It is probably not hard to defend the chronological limits and the title of this essay. There would seem to be a practical convenience in a treatment commencing with the earliest evidences of English national drama and closing with the highest accomplishment of that drama in the work of Shakespeare. Nor does it appear a gross exaggeration to include this entire evolution within the confines of "The Tudor Drama"; for though most of the specimens discussed in the first two chapters had their original inception in the century before the Tudor era began, there can be no doubt that they still remained at the opening of our period the most characteristic expressions of English dramatic genius,

and that their consideration belongs justly therefore to the history of Tudor culture.

The course of our study brings the orbit of English dramatic criticism to its perihelion in the examination of Shakespeare, the central sun, and those dramatic satellites who most closely share his attitude toward life and art. It would be an alluring task to trace this orbit still farther, through the clearly connected Jacobean, Caroline, and Restoration phases to its aphelion at the close of the Stuart epoch. But the consideration of Stuart drama in its entirety offers scope for another volume, and the temptation to stray beyond the logical line of demarcation has here been resisted, except where the individual work of Shakespeare forms for some nine years a kind of Tudor enclave in the midst of Jacobean literature.

The bibliographies appended to the various chapters have been arranged with the idea of placing directly before the reader's attention all the essential literature of the subjects under discussion. Absolute technical completeness in this matter seems beyond the range of a work which aspires to the notice of the undergraduate student and the general reader. However, the bibliographies have been independently compiled; and, except in the case of Shakespeare, no editions or commentaries have been intentionally omitted which appear to possess any present-day importance. Shakespearean texts and criticisms are so numerous and so abundantly catalogued already, that it has here been thought injudicious to go beyond the simple indication of the important early editions of each play. The admirable and very recent Shakespeare bibliography in the fifth volume of the "Cambridge History of Eng-

lish Literature" leaves little to be desired, and any recapitulation of its results on the smaller scale suited to this book would be a useless impertinence.

To my friends, Professor W. L. Phelps and Professor H. N. MacCracken of Yale University, I have the pleasure of expressing my most hearty thanks for various helpful suggestions and for the careful reading of all my proofs at a period of the academic year when such a service entailed a real sacrifice and became a double kindness.

C. F. T. B.

YALE UNIVERSITY, August, 1911.

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THE TUDOR DRAMA

CHAPTER I

SCRIPTURAL AND MIRACLE DRAMA

WHAT modern English life and literature are is due in a degree not easily overestimated to the three generations of Tudor sovereigns. Far more representative of national temper than any of their successors, much more practical in their assumption of the responsibilities of government than any group of their predecessors, the Tudors moulded popular feeling and created a permanent national consciousness. The influence of their age upon the drama was particularly beneficent. All that is most characteristic in the development of the English theatre falls easily within the one hundred and eighteen years of their dominion. Henry VII found the artless and provincial makeshifts of guild performances and the yet ruder devices of the incipient morality: Elizabeth left full-grown a public theatre; which, whether we measure its success by actual artistic results or by the sincerity of its reflection of contemporary life and thought, finds few parallels and probably no equal. The mystery cycles and "Everyman" represent the topmost reach of dramatic activity in England when the first Tudor sovereign began his reign; his grand-daughter might ere she died have seen "Hamlet" and "Sejanus."

The history of English drama as a distinct national

type begins with the maturity of the guild cycles, a characteristic development of the earlier cosmopolitan church drama, which first appears in the fourteenth century, attaining its greatest popularity in the fifteenth, but continuing with only gradually abating splendor till the close of the reign of Elizabeth.

The origin of the modern European theatre in the services of the mediæval church is matter of common knowledge, and the connection has perhaps received already more explanation than it requires. We shall see that the relation between dramatic literature and contemporary religious feeling continued in England till the very end of the Elizabethan period one of the most vital influences in the history of the stage. For the early Middle Ages religion filled much the place that education fills to-day. The Church was the gateway to all the learning, a full half of the magnificence, and a large part of the romance of life. To its direct inspiration we owe much of the most characteristic literature of mediævalism: the "Golden Legend," the "Gesta Romanorum," the "Cursor Mundi" and "Prick of Conscience," — no small part even of the work of Gower and Chaucer. But for the drama the ecclesiastical influence was wider than this. The pomp and ceremony of the mass, the gorgeous display of feast-day processions, and, above all, the existence of potential bands of actors in the robed and drilled monks and choristers, combined to make the Roman Church an inevitable nursery of the histrionic art.

During the ninth and tenth centuries the germs of modern drama appeared in the elaborate ritual of the Easter service in the greater cathedrals and monasteries of Europe. The dramatic liturgies thus evolved

consisted originally of a few lines of question and answer chanted responsively by priests, and taken almost literally from the Vulgate Latin lesson for the day. The following four lines of dialogue from a ninth-century manuscript of the Swiss monastery of St. Gall comprise the simplest version extant of the so-called Easter "trope":—

"Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, Christicolae?"
"Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae."
"Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro."

A century later the "Concordia Regularis" of St. Ethanwold (ca. 980) furnishes the first document dealing with the drama on English soil, in a set of directions for the acting of a Winchester trope differing only in the slightest details from that of St. Gall.

In imitation of these Easter celebrations, bits of choral dialogue, likewise beginning with the words "Quem quaeritis," were early devised for insertion into the services of Christmas and Ascension Day. Once introduced, the dramatic element in the liturgy became widely popular and rapidly extended itself. Harking back from the Christmas play of the Saviour's birth, characters and events from the Old Testament were introduced by way of prologue or forecast, while at the same time the Easter and Ascension plays developed sequels dealing with the reign of Antichrist and the Final Judgment. It was but the matter of a century or so till the two sets of plays, presenting respectively the birth of Christ and his resurrection and ascension, had grown to meet each other and fused into a complete religious drama embracing the history of the Bible from Creation to Judgment Day.

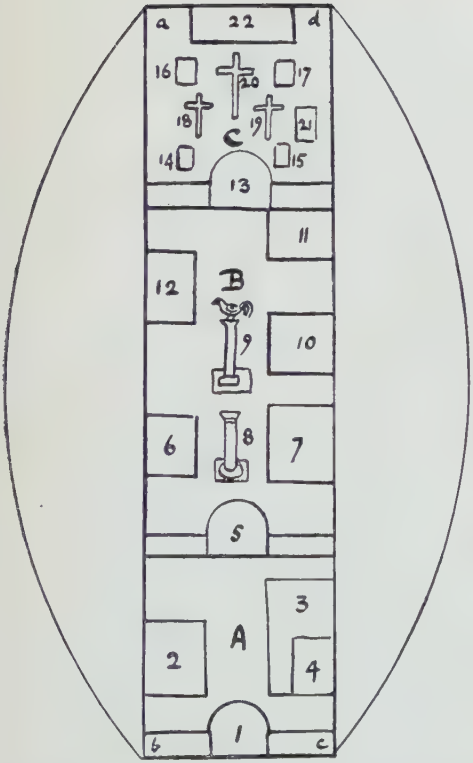
Into the nature of the drama which was thus forming itself during the middle centuries of the dark ages within the bosom of the Church, there entered several alien elements, later productive of scandal, suppression, persecution, and finally the complete self-assertion and independence of the stage. The licensed burlesques of religion, incident to jocular monastic festivals like the Feast of the Ass and the Boy Bishop, were the means of introducing into the serious drama the element of comic irreverence which persists in the Elizabethan Lords of Misrule,[1] and which, long before the time of Elizabeth, had annihilated all just claim of the theatre to religious influence or ecclesiastical sanction.

From primeval pagan customs like the village dance the nascent drama derived important characteristics, only thinly disguised under the religious exterior of the whole, — characteristics which survive most plainly in the Morris dances and St. George plays of later times.[2]

A third source of extra-ecclesiastical influence existed in the mimetic performances of the buffoons and story-tellers — mimes and jongleurs — who wandered everywhere through mediæval Europe, ministering to the popular thirst for that histrionic imitation of life which the serious church drama gave, and yet gave insufficiently. For these mimes it is possible to make out a continuous, though partly supposititious, pedigree, straight from the late Latin mountebanks to the clowns of the Elizabethan stage, — the only piece of

[1] For an unsympathetic, Puritan, account of the Lords of Misrule, see Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), ed. 1879, 146–148.

[2] See A. B. Beatty, *The St. George or Mummers' Plays; a Study in the Protology of the Drama*, 1906.



KEY TO NO. 1.

A, B, C. The three divisions of the stage, corresponding to the nave, choir, and sanctuary of a church.

1. The first door.
2. Hell.
3. The Garden of Gethsemane.
4. Mount Olivet.
5. The second door.
6. Herod's palace.
7. Pilate's palace.
8. The pillar of scourging.
9. The pillar for the cock.
10. The house of Caiaphas.
11. The house of Annas.
12. The house of the Last Supper.
13. The third door.
14, 15, 16, 17. Graves from which the dead arise.
18, 19. Crosses of the two thieves.
20. Cross of Christ.
21. The Holy Sepulchre.
22. Heaven.

A GERMAN SKETCH OF THE *MISE EN SCÈNE* FOR RELIGIOUS PLAYS ACTED WITHIN THE CHURCH, FROM DONAUESCHINGEN

Reproduced from E. K. Chambers, *Mediæval Stage.*

even tolerably probable classic influence which the English drama can be shown to feel for many a day.

The history of dramatic origins is an international affair. Evidence has to be pieced together over the face of all Europe, and one of the most striking facts evolved is the original absence of local or personal peculiarities. For England, indeed, till the beginning of the fourteenth century, the dramatic records are so scanty as to reveal almost nothing, except a general and rather backward adherence to the scheme of development, illustrated by the liturgical plays of France and Germany. The earliest drama was written entirely in Latin, and without suggestion of any special local consciousness. Only in the more advanced and less orthodox plays can we trace the gradual intrusion of the vernacular spirit and idiom.

It is usual to count among the very earliest attempts at dramatic writing in English "The Harrowing of Hell," preserved in three manuscripts of the beginning of the fourteenth century. This piece of two hundred and forty-four lines consists mainly of speeches, in short riming couplets, by Dominus (*i. e.*, Christ), Satan, the "Janitor" of Hell, and the departed spirits of Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, John the Baptist, and Moses. It seems perfectly clear, however, that the work was never intended for actual presentation, and it remains doubtful whether its author can properly be considered to have crossed the wide gulf which separates the true drama from the universal mediæval device of rhetorical, homiletic dialogue.

Much more real importance attaches to three dramatic fragments discovered at Shrewsbury in 1890. Each of these pieces gives the speeches of a single actor

in a play, partly English and partly Latin, dealing respectively with the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Resurrection, and the Journey to Emmaus. Though the manuscript which contains them has been referred to no earlier date than the commencement of the fifteenth century, these three broken survivals seem the best existing illustration of theatrical conditions in England, during the long dark period of transition from the Latin dramatized liturgy to the play of native speech and character.[1]

Genuinely national drama shows itself first in England, in the fourteenth century, and it owes its existence in the form in which we find it to two apparently quite irrelevant circumstances. The first is the establishment by Pope Clement V, in 1311, of the Thursday after Trinity Sunday as the feast of Corpus Christi,[2] in recognition of the theory of transubstantiation. This festival, occurring in early summer, two months after Easter and ten days after Whitsunday, was everywhere a day of popular celebration, and it became in England the period *par excellence* for dramatic performances. Nearly all the cyclical mystery plays were destined for presentation either on Corpus Christi Day itself, or during the previous week of Whitsuntide.

The second alien influence which shaped early English dramatic convention was the rise of the trade guilds. During the whole career of the mystery play, these self-governing corporations of Bakers, Barkers, Butchers, and so forth, largely dominated the civic poli-

[1] For an admirable study of liturgical dramatic origins, see F. W. Cady, "The Liturgical Basis of the Towneley Mysteries," *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, 1909.

[2] Ineffectively promulgated by Urban IV in 1264.

cies of all the important towns. At the earliest period from which it is possible to trace the consecutive history of English drama — that is, in the first half of the fourteenth century — we find that the production and performance of plays had already passed, for the most part, out of the hands of the clergy and into those of the guilds. Parish plays did still exist, particularly in the smaller villages, where presumably the guild system had been relatively little developed,[1] and, for special reasons, in the city of London. There are, too, indications of the acting of mystery plays by strolling companies of professionals, such as commonly presented moralities. But those features of the mystery play, which have most significance for the evolution of the later drama, are particularly the outgrowth of the artistic method and the treatment of life inaugurated and maintained in the guild performances.

There are still extant, either in full or fragmentarily, mystery plays acted during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries by the trade guilds of Chester, York, Wakefield, Coventry, Norwich, and Newcastle. These remains make up in volume, as well as in historical significance and inherent merit, by far the most important existing portion of the English Scriptural drama. Guild plays of similar nature, well authenticated by records, but unfortunately not known to survive, were acted at Beverley (Yorkshire), Aberdeen, Canterbury, Lincoln, Hereford, and in many other places. As regards the Wakefield cycle, preserved in

[1] See the interesting notes of expenditures for dramatic performances preserved in the Church-wardens' Accounts of Yarmouth and Bungay between 1462 and 1591, quoted by L. T. Bolingbroke, *Norfolk Archæology*, xi (1892), 334–338.

the famous Towneley manuscript, few details concerning the manner or date of performance are at hand. All the others named above were presented on Corpus Christi Day, with the exception of those of Chester, Norwich, and probably Lincoln, where the production seems to have been pushed forward into the preceding week of Whitsuntide, or else deferred, as at Lincoln, till St. Anne's Day (July 26).

Of English mystery plays the Chester cycle appears to be the oldest in date of composition, as it is certainly the youngest in the matter of manuscript authority. There is very respectable evidence for the belief that the Chester performances began as early as 1328, and that the text presented in that year was prepared by no less a writer than the famous Ranulph Higden, author of "Polychronicon." [1] If this theory is correct, Higden must stand forth as both the first and the last literary personality, who can be at all reasonably credited with the composition of English mysteries. The Chester plays are extant in five manuscripts, dating from the period 1591–1607. The two other sets of guild plays which survive in fairly complete form, those of York and Wakefield respectively, are each preserved in a single mid-fifteenth-century text. The composition of the York cycle has been referred to about 1350, while that of the Wakefield group, which in originality and literary value marks the highest reach of English dramatic writing in this kind, is ascribed with much probability to the opening decades of the fifteenth century.

[1] In defence of Higden's authorship, see E. K. Chambers, *Mediæval Stage*, ii, 348 ff and, in particular, S. B. Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, 1909, xix ff.

Of the ten plays which originally made up the genuine Coventry cycle, only two exist, transmitted in sixteenth-century versions: the one, acted by the Shearmen and Tailors, dealing with the Birth of Christ and the Slaughter of the Innocents; the other, that of the Weavers, presenting Christ before the Doctors in the Temple. From the Norwich cycle, as from that of Newcastle, we possess only a single play. The records of the Grocers' Company of the former city preserve two versions, dated 1533 and 1565 respectively, of the drama acted by that guild, the subject being the fall of man and expulsion from Paradise;[1] while from the Newcastle sequence there remains the play of the building of the ark, assigned, with the rather fantastic appropriateness usual in the distribution of subjects, to the guild of the Shipwrights.

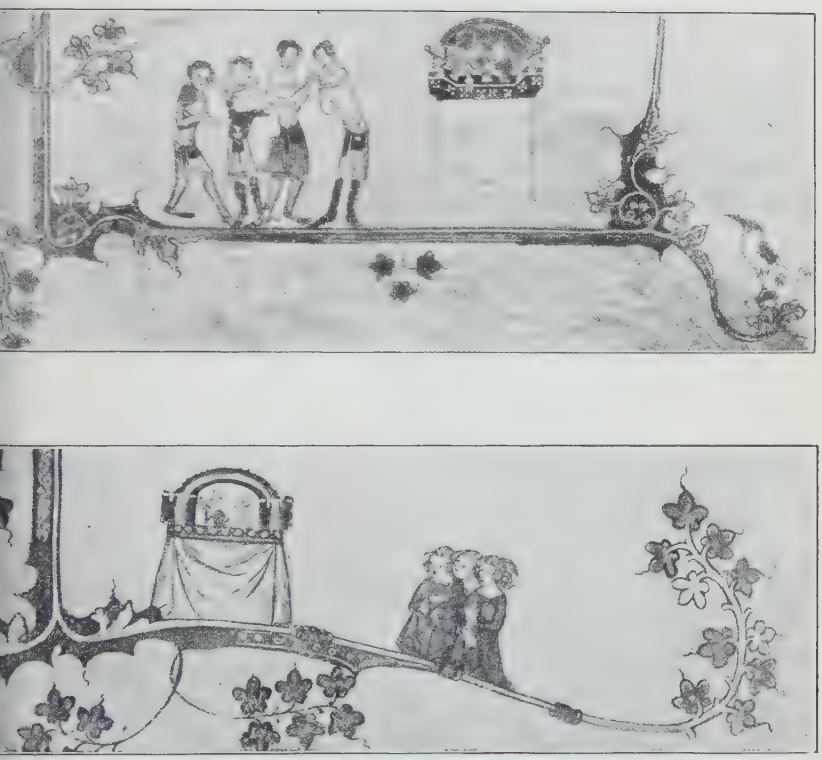
The guild performances introduced many very important innovations in the staging of religious drama. The species had originated in the Church, and while performed by the clergy, seems nearly always to have been presented, either in the sanctuary itself, or on the holy ground adjoining. We know little or nothing of the causes and manner of transference from Church to guild, except that it was gradual. Church performances certainly existed in many places by the side of guild performances, and the ecclesiastical authorities of several towns enjoyed a practical, as well as a theoretical control, over the lay actors. The result of the change, however accomplished, was a great increase

[1] These texts were first printed, with valuable extracts from the guild book by R. Fitch, *Norfolk Archæology*, v (1859). A list of the twelve Norwich pageants, of which the Grocers' alone survives, is given by H. Harrod, *Norfolk Archæology*, iii (1852), 3–18.

both in the number of players and in the number of spectators; and at the same time, probably, the loss of the old place of presentation, which, even if retained, could hardly have sufficed for the increased demands. It was a matter no longer of a religious exercise by parish clergy, before a congregation of the righteous, but rather of a spectacle offering scope in the production for the rivalry of all the city crafts, and having as a public the whole motley and congested population of a mediæval town on fair day.

The usual solution of the difficulty was the development of the individual pageant and the processional style of acting. The "pageant" was, in its simplest form, a stage on wheels, provided and decorated by one of the town guilds for the exhibition of the particular portion of the Scripture story assigned to that guild. Ordinarily, there were two floors: the upper, an open platform where the play was acted; the lower, an enclosed dressing-room for the actors. The various pageants naturally differed in appearance, according to the taste and wealth of the guild which furnished them, and also according to the nature of the scene to be staged upon them. So the pageant of the craft of fishermen, presenting Noah and the flood, would be formed into a rough similitude of the Ark, while those used for scenes where devils were to appear would have the passage between dressing-room and stage adorned with the conventional representation of "hell-mouth."[1] Altogether, in general shape and use, and in the arrangements for their building and up-keep, the guild

[1] The third (Glaziers') pageant in the Norwich procession was entitled "Hell Cart," and payments were made by this guild "for keeping of fire at Hell Mo[u]the." Cf. *Norfolk Archæology*, iii, 12.



HUMOROUS SKETCHES OF 14TH CENTURY PAGEANTS, WITH THEIR AUDIENCES

Illustrations from a French MS. (Bodley 264), probably compiled on English soil

pageants manifest some analogy to the rows of barges maintained on Isis or Cam, by the different colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. If we remember the former to be vehicles on wheels rather than boats, and conceive them small enough to be drawn by eight or ten guild members through narrow mediæval streets, there will probably be even a certain similarity of appearance.

In the palmy days of the mystery play — through the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth — every guild was required to support a pageant, either independently or, in the case of the less prosperous bodies, in connection with others; and every craftsman was taxed annually for "pageant pence." On the other hand, those members who acted parts in the plays, as well as those detailed to draw the pageant, received fees in proportion to their services. Dilatory or careless guilds, and actors who failed to learn their parts, were fined. The average cost per capita to the guild members of a play-acting city may have been from twopence to eightpence a year, — no very inconsiderable sum in 1450. Certainly there was incessant grumbling over what was increasingly felt to be an exaction, and constant appeals were made to the corporation for relief or redistribution of the burden. The end of the Norwich Grocers' Pageant, about 1570, is probably representative of the ultimate fate of all. This structure, described as "a Howse of Waynskott, paynted and buylded on a Carte, with foure whelys," and adorned with a gilt griffin, was on the discontinuance of the annual performances stored with one John Sotherton in London, till, the charges having reached the sum of twenty shillings, and the vehicle having become rotten and unsalable, Sotherton's heir, Nicholas,

was authorized to reimburse himself by knocking it to pieces.[1]

In some towns a single performance of the cycle in a public place was regarded as sufficient. Such seems to have been the practice at Canterbury and Norwich. But more generally, as at Chester, York, Beverley, Newcastle, and Coventry, it was found necessary, in order to reach all the multitudinous spectators, to repeat the performances at each of a number of stations, in different parts of the city. The pageants moved in procession from one appointed stopping place to the next, and found an audience gathered at each. Thus, the pageant of the guild first in order, presenting normally the fall of Lucifer and the creation of man, would give its play at station one, and then move to station two for a second performance, while the pageant next in order would be acting before the spectators at the first station the next scene in the Bible story — say, the killing of Abel. The *locus classicus* concerning the appearance and use of the guild pageants is found in the words of Archdeacon Rogers of Chester (d. 1595), preserved in two British Museum manuscripts (Harley 1948 and 1944), and first quoted in Thomas Sharp's "Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries" in 1825. Rogers defines the pageant as "a high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher room they played, being all open on the top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places where they played them was in every street. They began first at the Abbey gates [*i. e.*, in Chester performances] and when the first pageant was played,

[1] Cf. *Norfolk Archæology*, v (1859), 31.

it was wheeled to the high cross before the Mayor, and so to every street, and so every street had a pageant playing before them at one time, till all the pageants for the day appointed were played, and when one pageant was near ended, word was brought from street to street, that so they might come in place thereof, exceeding orderly, and all the streets have their pageants afore them all at one time playing together; to see which plays was great resort, and also scaffolds and stages made in the streets in those places where they determined to play their pageants."

The guild plays deserve the especial attention of the student of the drama, because in the matter of stage practice, and in the development of certain comic ideals and types, their influence upon later dramaturgy is paramount. The rivalry between the different crafts in the decoration and costuming of their respective pageants produced, naturally, a lavishness of expenditure and a taste for gorgeous, if anachronistic, stage finery, quite beyond the imaginings of the simple church performers or the itinerant actors of moralities. When the Elizabethan drama sprang new into existence, during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, it took over, with little change or conscious development, the properties, the scenic effects, and much of the stage business which the guild actors had evolved. The relation on the purely literary side is much more remote, but in respect of the externals of stage management, there is no doubt that the drama of Elizabeth is influenced throughout its career by the popular taste and æsthetic standards, developed during the two preceding centuries by the most elaborate dramatic entertainments of that period, — those presented by the

guilds at Corpus Christi. Extensive records of the expenditure for *mise en scène* are extant in the guild books of Coventry, Chester, Beverley, Norwich, and elsewhere; and these form a most illuminating counterpart to the similar entries in the famous diary of Shakespeare's contemporary and rival stage-manager, Philip Henslowe.

The same emulation between the guilds, which impelled each to vie with the rest in the gorgeousness of its pageant and the splendor of its costumes, led them also to bid for popularity in another manner significant for the history of the later drama. The Scriptural plays, while acted within the church, can hardly have contained many avowedly humorous touches, though certain germs of comedy may be detected, as we have seen, from almost the very start. In the hands of the guilds, however, the plays were relieved from immediate ecclesiastical supervision, and the temptation was strong for each craft to make the most of the dramatic possibilities of the scene allotted to it. In most cases, buffoonery was felt to possess a surer hold on the attention of the spectators than pathos, and every comic hint was eagerly improved. With the main figures in the Bible narrative, few such liberties could be taken. Cain, Noah, Joseph, Pilate, and Herod offered most scope for humorous treatment. But the greatest opportunity for the comic writer lay in the development of minor characters, to which the Scripture ascribes no distinct personality; and here we find arising and maturing, among the artless crudities of dramatized religion, a comedy of real life, which not only kept the guild plays alive, in the face of violent municipal and ecclesiastical hostility, long after they had

lost every other hold on their public, but which passed easily and with unimpaired vitality into the later drama. The "garcio" or servant of Cain, the wife of Noah, Pharaoh king of Egypt, Augustus Cæsar, the shepherds of the nativity, the torturers of the crucifixion, Lucifer, Antichrist, and the demons of the final judgment, are all figures concerning whose character the Bible has nothing, or very little, to say. Here, then, the fledgling drama might try its wings, unrestrained by respect for authority or fear of heterodoxy.

In the insertion and treatment of comic incident we find the most significant differences between the various extant cycles, and here we can perceive the first hints of the all-important change from the workings of impersonal, popular tendencies to the conscious art of an easily recognizable, though nameless, dramatic genius. Of the extant cycles, that of York contains the least comedy, not so much probably because the text of these plays seems to be a little earlier than that of the rest, as because the clerical censorship of the guild performances is known to have been considerably more strict in the archiepiscopal city than elsewhere. The Chester plays, as we have them, represent an advance in freedom upon those of York, and contain a few scenes of good fooling, but they bear little relation to the other cycles, and have been regarded by some critics as an imitation from French sources.[1] The Coventry Shearmen-Tailors' play of the Slaughter of the Innocents introduces a Herod of well-developed comic proportions, who, as a stage direction informs us,

[1] See, in opposition to this theory, S. B. Hemingway, *op. cit* xxiv ff.

"ragis in the pagond and in the strete also," and who seems half independent of the serious story. Equally advanced is the humor of the Newcastle Shipwrights' play, where the devil enters, with his customary shout of "Out, out, harro, and welaway," to work mischief in Noah's household by arousing the suspicion and perversity of the patriarch's shrewish wife.

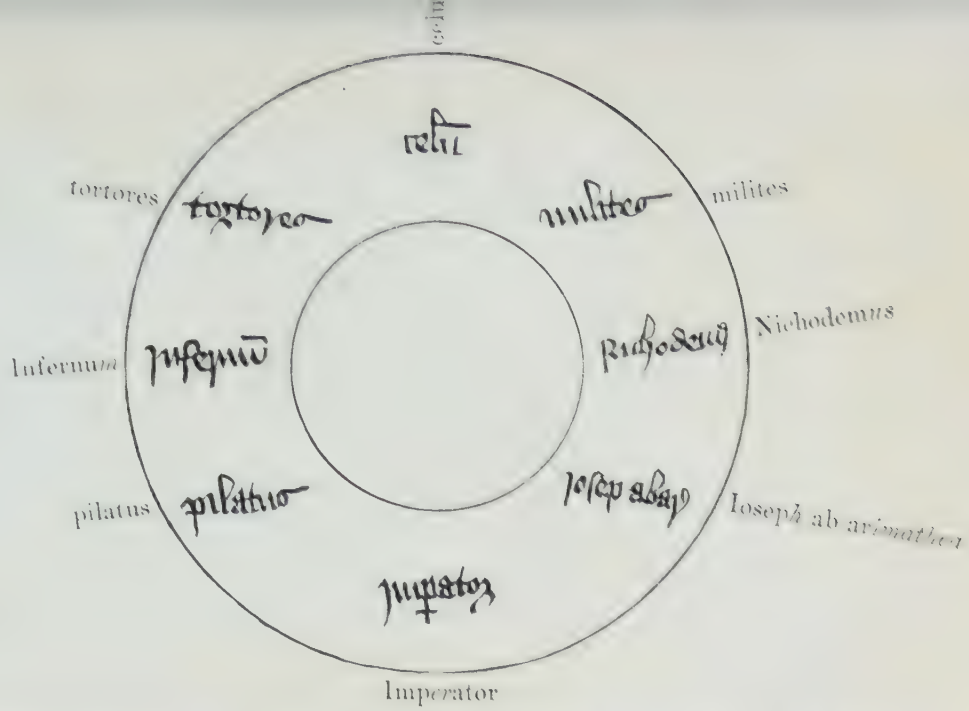
Rustic clownage comes finally into its own in the Wakefield or "Towneley" cycle, where the serious narrative is often little more than a peg upon which to hang farcical sketches of braggarts like Pharaoh, Herod, and Augustus; or satire on contemporary political and social conditions, as in the Judgment Day scene between Tutivillus and his companion demons; or else realistic studies in north-country peasant life, such as the garcio of Cain, Noah's obdurate wife, or the numerous shepherd types. It is in this last genre, so characteristic of his district, that the Wakefield master-dramatist has secured his greatest triumphs. Pike-harnes, the garcio, or ploughboy, is a good yokel type, free of tongue and fist; but the shepherds are pictured with even greater sympathy and local color. Two separate, alternative versions of the shepherd scene exist, totalling more than twelve hundred lines. In both sketches the gospel matter is ignored through at least three quarters of the play by reason of the author's interest in the character and conversation of his well-individualized shepherds. The second play, the celebrated "Secunda [Pagina] Pastorum," carries us indeed well out of the province of Scriptural drama, and into that of pure comedy, presenting English literature in the episode of Mak, the sheep-stealer, with a native farce, which is not only the first extant example

of this species, but which, in the handling of suspense and climax, is unequalled by any work of the next century and a half.

In connection with the guild plays just discussed, it is necessary to consider the so-called "Ludus Coventriæ," generally counted as adding a fourth great mystery cycle to those of Chester, York, and Wakefield. In a number of important particulars, however, the "Ludus Coventriæ" stands alone, and in the present doubtful state of our knowledge concerning it, tends rather to obscure than to clear up the dramatic history of the time. There is no satisfactory ground for connecting this series of plays with the town of Coventry, where we know the guilds to have possessed and acted a very different set of performances. It may, indeed, be regarded as certain that the "Ludus Coventriæ" was not acted by guilds, and that it was exhibited, not in the processional manner usual with those bodies, but upon the large stationary platform, with separate "sedes," which was essentially only a reproduction out-of-doors of the original mediæval stage, *i. e.*, the nave and choir of the church. Such fixed stages are well known in connection with the Cornish religious plays of the fourteenth century, and they are represented in their most elaborate development in the sketch which illustrates the *mise en scène* of the first complete English morality, "The Castle of Perseverance." In many ways the "Ludus Coventriæ," standing quite apart from the contemporary guild cycles, forms a most interesting connecting link between the early Scriptural drama as presented in the Church — a species very scantily extant in England — and the morality plays in which strict religious didacticism came more and more to

express itself in proportion as it was supplanted by secular elements in the guild performances.

The manuscript of the "Ludus Coventriæ" is dated 1468, and belongs, therefore, to the same period as those in which the York and Wakefield plays are preserved. As might be expected from the fact of stationary presentation, the individual scenes of the "Ludus Coventriæ" are not so distinct as those of the processional cycles, where each scene was produced by a different company of actors and on a separate pageant. The present cycle falls most naturally into four or five large groups of scenes, many individuals of which cohere almost indissolubly, though the groups as a whole have only the roughest connection with each other. Between two of these groups, indeed, an intermission of an entire year is assumed; that is, the period from the creation to the betrayal was covered in one year and that from the trial of Christ to Doomsday in the next. In treatment of subject matter the "Ludus Coventriæ" bears more affinity to the German passion plays of the fifteenth century, such as that of Alsfeld, than to the other English cycles. The didactic purpose is here predominant, and the most notable feature of mediæval religion, the worship of the Virgin, is given an extraordinary prominence in fifteen plays, which trace her history from her conception and birth to her assumption. The "Ludus Coventriæ," indeed, is no more destitute of comic touches than the contemporary Biblical plays of Germany and France; and some of the humorous scenes, such as the coarse one between the detractors in the trial of Joseph and Mary, are vigorous and realistic. But the comedy is always incidental: it never allows the reader to lose sight of the



SKETCH ILLUSTRATING THE DIVISION OF THE FIXED CIRCULAR STAGE USED FOR THE CORNISH

RESURRENIO DOMINI NOSTRI

religious significance of the scene; it contributes little or nothing to the growth of independence in the construction of plot and character.

An interesting feature of the "Ludus Coventriæ," unparalleled in the other cycles, is the occasional introduction of allegorical figures, after the manner of the morality. Contemplacio serves as prolocutor and chorus through a large part of the work; Mors appears in person to slay King Herod; and one play even introduces a perfect little morality in the debate of the virtues Misericordia, Veritas, Justitia, and Pax, before the three persons of the Trinity.[1] Here we find the explanation of the existence, side by side, during the first half of the Tudor period of the mystery and the morality; for we can understand how, as the guilds came more and more to secularize and appropriate to comic uses the old Scriptural drama, religious orthodoxy was driven to abandon that theme, and seek expression in the newer allegorical form, — there also to be ultimately expelled.

We are not sure of the precise circumstances under which the "Ludus Coventriæ" was acted. The cycle is introduced by an argument, spoken by three *vexillatores*, or advertising agents, who make little mention of the more theological portions, and promise, by implication, at least, that the whole play (intended according to the text for performance in two parts in consecutive years) shall be presented "A Sunday next — At vi. of the belle — In N. towne." Various interpretations have been hazarded, particularly for the phrase "N. towne." Northampton and Norwich have both been suggested, with no very great plausibility; but the

[1] The abstract figures of Dolor and Misery are similarly introduced into the later (1565) version of the Norwich Grocers' Pageant.

safest hypothesis seems still to be that "N" (*nomen*) means simply that the name of any town was to be inserted, according as circumstances might require. It appears to me most probable that the "Ludus Coventriæ" was composed originally under the auspices of some religious body, for acting at some fixed place, one half being presented each year; and that it later fell into the hands of a strolling company, such as ordinarily acted moralities, for whom was written certainly the prologue, and not improbably some of the comic buffoonery as well.

Fifteenth-century Scriptural drama, produced in apparent independence of the guild convention, is further exemplified in several miscellaneous survivals. A Bodleian manuscript in a northerly dialect (E Museo 160) preserves "a play to be playede, on part on gudfriday after-none, & the other part opon Ester day after the resurrectione, in the morowe." The subjects are those most appropriate to the period of performance,—the deposition from the cross and resurrection; and the treatment emphasizes everywhere the devotional, rather than the dramatic possibilities of the theme. No trace of humor appears, nor even the slightest knowledge of the principles of stage presentation; and the earlier part of the play, which the scribe terms as a whole a "treyte [treatise] or meditatione," seems to have been originally composed in narrative form. Far the most striking and poetic division of the work is its version of the "Planctus Mariæ," or lamentation of the Virgin over the Saviour's dead body; and this passage, running to 180 consecutive lines, is conceived altogether in the spirit of the contemporary religious lyrics on the same subject, with one of which it even

shares its effective refrain: "Who can not wepe, com lern at me." [1]

Two unconnected plays on the story of Abraham and Isaac manifest a far higher reach of dramatic power than the "Burial and Resurrection," just mentioned; but they are equally devoid of humorous matter or other trace of secular contamination, and there is no evidence that either belonged at any time to a cycle. These little dramas, consisting of 369 and 465 lines each, are generally designated as the Dublin and the Brome play, from the respective localities where the manuscripts are preserved. It seems likely, however, that the title is in both cases entirely misleading, in so far as the original place of performance is concerned.

The Trinity College, Dublin, manuscript (D IV. 18), which contains the one play, can be assigned by the nature of its varied contents to the later years of Henry VI (ca. 1458). The inclusion of a list of the mayors and bailiffs of Northampton points to the neighborhood of that town as the district in which the manuscript was compiled; and the evidence of dialect and spelling in the play itself, strongly supports the idea that it originated, not in the vicinity of the Irish city, where the only text happens to have found lodging, but in one of the midland counties of England.

It may well be that the chance which connects the other play of "Abraham's Sacrifice," with the remote manor of Brome on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk, is as arbitrary as that which dictated that the Northampton (?) play should come to light in Dublin. It is true that the late fifteenth-century Brome manuscript is shown by its interspersed local accounts to

[1] Cf. Furnivall, *Hymns to Virgin*, 1867, 126, 127.

have been written upon the spot to which its name refers it. Yet the damaged metre of the play as there presented, together with the early spirit of the piece, show that the Brome scribe cannot have been the original author. So, the striking similarity between the central portion of the play (ll. 114–315) and the corresponding lines in the Chester guild version of the same subject, make it fairly impossible to believe that the entire breadth of England can have interposed between the conception of the two works. This close verbal parallel between the Chester and Brome plays, proving either direct influence or a common source, is the more noteworthy because it is the only instance in which any immediate connection between the different dramatic renderings of the Abraham story can safely be assumed. Attempts have indeed been made to relate each of the three versions of Dublin, Brome, and Chester to a French original, but as yet with no convincing result.

The Dublin and Brome plays are the finest of the six Middle English dramas, dealing with Abraham and Isaac. Quite distinct in form and treatment, they both rank among the most gravely affecting individual specimens of Scriptural drama; and both seem to have taken their rise in the early epoch, before the influences of cyclical combination and secular performance had weakened the independent character and the moral earnestness of the separate play.

The Dublin text — the shorter of the two by a hundred lines — is decidedly the more discursive in its method. It introduces the figure of Sara, who does not elsewhere appear, and considerably elaborates the parts of the angel and "Deus." The stage directions

indicate a large, fixed stage, presenting four different localities: Heaven, the ground before Abraham's house, the place where Abraham and Isaac leave their servants, and the place of sacrifice. At least five, probably six, scenes can be marked (1–34, 35–83, 84–135, 136–159?, 160–317, 318–369), and the stage directions infer a carefully planned mode of presentation.[1]

In the Brome play, attention is concentrated almost wholly upon the two main figures, and the feelings of father and son are depicted with a pathos and truthfulness nowhere surpassed, perhaps, in the drama of this era. The piece is pretty obviously intended for the same fixed stage employed by the Dublin play, but no such care is shown in the discrimination of separate scenes or the indication of changes of locality. Rather, the means of effective stage action are to a great extent ignored in the ardor with which the unknown author pursues his main object in the delineation of filial piety and selfless devotion to the divine will. For this very reason, the Brome play, in spite of its probably maimed and sophisticated text, remains a finer dramatic achievement than the other piece. It is, indeed, the most favorable example extant of the capabilities of pure religious drama, as yet unmixed with any secular element, and innocent of knowledge concerning the tricks and limitations of practical stagecraft.

One last piece of English Scriptural drama demands consideration, — the very interesting play of Herod and the Slaughter of the Innocents, preserved in a

[1] *E. g.*, "Et vadit angelus ad terram et expectat usque dum Habraham dicit," ll. 34, 35; and "Et equitat [Abraham] versus Saram et dicit Sara: —

"'A, welcome souereigne, withouten doute;
How haue ye fared whils ye haue ben oute?'" ll. 318, 319.

Bodleian manuscript (Digby 133) ascribed to the first years of the Tudor era. This drama is distinctly intended for representation on a fixed stage, and presumably under ecclesiastical patronage, for the Prologue states that the performance occurs on St. Anne's Day, in remembrance of the mother of the Virgin. On the previous year, we are told, the same company had acted "in this place" the nativity, with the joy of the shepherds and the three kings of the East; while the Epilogue announces the intention "the next yeer, as we be purposid in our mynde, The disputacion of the doctours to shew in your presens." Minstrels and virgins are referred to as contributing to the "solace" of the audience and the reverence of God, — in what way exactly we are not told. This Digby play, often referred to as "Candlemas Day," [1] is perhaps the most formally perfect mystery extant, though certainly not comparable in genius with the best work of the guild cycles. The verse is evidently the production of a serious scholar, probably a cleric and presumably the "Poeta" who speaks the words of the Prologue and Epilogue. The metrical form is the same throughout: eight-line stanzas, with the comparatively difficult ballade arrangement used by Chaucer in the "Monk's Tale." Alliterative effect is also introduced carefully, though not consistently. The humor is good, but much more staid than in the guild plays of equal development. Herod boasts and threatens with a reserve of kingly dignity; and a useful stock type appears in Watkin, the cowardly courtier who sets out to earn knighthood by slaying the innocents, but suffers an ignominious beating from the distaffs of their mothers. The stage

[1] Collier reads, "Childermas Day," ed. 1879, ii, 156.

directions in this carefully prepared text, like those in the two other important plays in the same manuscript, throw some light on the mode of presentation on the fixed platform, used for the church mysteries and the moralities. This stage, presumably round, is divided into a number of segments representing, one the court of Herod, another the house of Mary and Joseph, another the open place where the children are slain, etc.; and the actors "go visiting," as in children's games, from one to the other. After Herod has given orders for the execution of the babes, we are told: "her the knyghtes and watkyn walke a-bought the place tyll Mary and Ioseph be convied in-to Egipt." Consequently, we have interpolated the scene in which the angel warns Mary, the making ready of the ass, and the departure of Joseph and Mary with the infant Jesus. Then the knights and Watkin, who have meantime been walking about the "place" (*platea*), or open part of the platform, not assigned particularly to any locality, turn toward the mothers and begin the Slaughter of Innocents.

All the plays so far discussed belong to the class commonly called "mysteries"; that is, they are, or purport to be, dramatizations of events described in Holy Scripture. The term "mystery" has in this sense no authority. It seems to have been first employed, in 1744, by the original editor of Dodsley's "Collection of Old Plays," who invented it as a cognate of the French "mystère," the usual name of a Scriptural play. During the period when the religious drama flourished in England, we find such works alluded to simply as "plays" or "pageants," or else more techni-

cally as "miracles." Nevertheless, the exotic title of Dodsley is worth retaining, because it permits us to differentiate between the type of drama hitherto treated, based always, though sometimes remotely, on the Bible story; and a sufficiently different type to which the name "miracle" is properly applied.

These last plays are sparsely extant in England, but are known from records to have been once common, as indeed might be inferred from the circumstance of their lending their specific name to the entire category to which they belong.[1] Miracle plays, properly so called, present the life of some saint, or depict some prodigy wrought in behalf of religion. Most frequently they have nothing to do with the Old or New Testament; and the nature of the subject matter, looking always toward a sensation in the shape of a miracle or conversion, would seem normally to foster a more romantic and independent treatment than the grave and sacred character of the Bible itself would easily allow. The first miracle play known to have been acted in England is a lost "Ludus de Sancta Katarina," written, according to the thirteenth-century chronicler, Matthew Paris, by one Geoffrey, a Norman, later Abbot of St. Albans, and acted soon after 1100 at Dunstable in Bedfordshire. Costumes for the performance were borrowed from St. Albans, and accidentally destroyed by a conflagration in Geoffrey's house. The actors of

[1] The earliest recorded allusion to the performance of non-liturgical plays in England refers to miracle plays in the strict sense: "Lundonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, ludos habet sanctiores, *representationes miraculorum quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum.*" See Collier, ed. 1879, i, 11.

this piece were schoolboys, and Geoffrey, their master, in training them for his drama, was anticipating the practice of Nicholas Udall and many another Elizabethan pedagogue or choir director. The language of Geoffrey's Ludus was presumably Latin, possibly French; English it can hardly have been. It is possible that English drama may have a like indirect claim to the three miracle plays of Geoffrey's contemporary, Hilarius, written in Latin with occasional Norman-French insertions.

Far more important, however, than any of these is what seems to be the first extant miracle fragment in the English vernacular, — the fourteenth-century "Dux Moraud," preserved in a Bodleian manuscript, to which attention has only recently been directed.[1] This piece is a true theatrical document, containing the lines of a single player, for whose exclusive use it was evidently prepared, but giving no hint of the speeches of the other *dramatis personæ*. The manuscript stops, naturally, with the last words of this particular character, at a point considerably antecedent, it would seem, to the end of the play as a whole, and thus contains no allusion to the culminating wonder, with which the drama must have closed. Fortunately, the subject of this precious torso is so familiar from contemporary narrative versions, that it is easy to conjecture the general substance of the missing portion. The theme is the Apollonius of Tyre story of paternal incest, and it is the father who speaks the 268 lines preserved by chance. After two long stanzas invoking the audience to avoid "janglings" and noise, the actor introduces himself: "Duk Morawd I hot be name, Korteyser lord

[1] The text was first printed by W. Heuser in *Anglia*, 1907.

may be none." He then takes affectionate leave of his wife, who is about to set out on a journey, and prays Jesus to save him from "wykyt thowtes" during her absence. Later speeches indicate his fall first into guilty desire and then into actual sin, with his resultant connivance at the murder of his wife and his daughter's child. In the midst of his satisfaction over the removal of these obstacles to secret guilt, he hears a bell ringing "yendyr in the kyrk." He betakes himself thither, confesses to the priest, and vows a penitential pilgrimage. He takes leave of his daughter with pious admonition, but that remorseless sinner, angry at his defection, hands him over to an unspecified kind of death; and his last speech announces: —

> " Now my lyf wyl pase
> Fro me this ilk stonde —
> Iesu ful of gras
> For-geue the this trespas
> That thou ast don to me,
> & geue the gras to blyn [cease]
> Of that wykyd syn
> Quylk [which] thou ast don so fre —
> Iesu haue mercy on me,
> & saue my sowle fro helle !"

So ends the father's part, but the pious author of the play could hardly have been content to leave the daughter in a reprobate state. The story was a favorite with mediæval homilists, and is related in at least three early English metrical versions, which tell how the daughter, upon slaying her father, journeyed into another country, where, after a life of continued sin, she was delivered from the devils within her by the godly preaching of St. Augustine. She confessed her crimes,

and died of remorse, whereupon a voice was heard to announce from above:—

> " The sowle of this synfull wyght
> Is now in heuyn lyght
> Before Jhesu cryst so dere." [1]

Somewhat similarly we must conceive the play to have ended. Certainly the daughter was the main character of the piece. It is she who performed the murder of mother and infant, who sacrificed even her repentant father; and it must have been her miraculous or semi-miraculous redemption, to which the author looked for the climax and conclusion of his drama.

Of complete English miracle plays in the strict sense there are known only three, all preserved in manuscripts which date either from the opening of the Tudor era or from the generation immediately preceding. Probably the earliest of these, and certainly the purest representative of the type, is the "Play of the Conversion of Sir Jonathas the Jew by Miracle of the Blessed Sacrament," which the introductory "banns" announce the intention of acting "At Croxton on Monday." Seven distinct Croxtons contend for the honor of having inspired this most rare specimen of the early drama, and it is at present possible only to assign it vaguely to some locality of that name in the English Midland. The date must be subsequent to 1461, in which year occurred, as we are told, the miracle celebrated by the play. The Croxton drama has for its purpose the assertion of that late mediæval doctrine of transubstantiation, which Corpus Christi Day was set apart to solemnize, and which thus proved indirectly so fateful in

[1] Cf. Herrig's *Archiv*, 79 (1887), 424.

the development of the guild cycles. The plot shows how Sir Aristorius, a merchant of Eraclea in Aragon, is bribed by a most unchristian Jew, Sir Jonathas, to steal the Host from the altar. Sir Jonathas proceeds, with his four Israelitish servants, to maltreat the wafer, which bleeds, causes Sir Jonathas the loss of his arm, and finally assumes the form of the Saviour himself, converts the unbelievers, and returns again to the shape of bread. The staging of this play is elaborate, and illustrates well the development which the non-processional drama had attained by the commencement of the Tudor period. Separate portions of the platform are set aside to represent the house of Aristorius, that of Jonathas, and the church. The rest of the stage is unallotted territory where all parties may meet to transact business, or where, if they like, characters not acting at the moment may walk about without appearing to see what is going forward. One notes a considerable amount of stage property and some most remarkable effects. Aristorius walks from his house to the church, apparently pretends to unlock the door, and takes the Host from within. The house of Jonathas contains a practicable table, caldron, and oven, and the stage directions make demands whose fulfilment one would much like to have elucidated. In one place we are told: "Here the (H) Ost must blede;" in another, "Here shall they pluke the arme, & the hand shalle hang stylle with the Sacrament," a picture of horrid realism which suggests the plucking off of Faustus's leg by the horse courser. Later a stage direction announces, "Here shall the cawdron byle, apperyng to be as blood"; and the most puzzling of all testifies to illusion of no simple order: "Here the ovyn

must ryve asunder & blede owt at the cranys, & an image appere owt with woundis bledyng." The Croxton play contains some respectable humor of the morality type, notably in the figure of Coll, servant to the quack physician, Mr. Brendych of Brabant.[1]

Two other works may be associated with that just discussed as being, at least in part, "miracles." They are the Digby plays of "The Conversion of St. Paul" and "Mary Magdalene." The former is based on the "Acts of the Apostles," but is certainly to be regarded rather as a miracle play than as a mystery. It treats the early adventures of the apostle with the greatest imaginative freedom, focussing interest upon his miraculous conversion, and closing with a perfunctory account of his escape over the walls of Damascus. Of the matters with which the mystery writer would most engage himself, should he choose such a subject, — Paul's services to Christianity, his journeys, and final martyrdom, — there is only the barest trace. The play was most probably written for performance on the Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25), and was presumably acted under the patronage of the Church. Like the other Digby plays, this is a work of conscious literary art. It is full of introductions, conclusions, and interpolations of the Poeta (Miles Blomefield, if we are to believe a manuscript note) who apologizes for the pretended roughness of his almost painfully precise and careful little drama with all the mock

[1] The quack doctor and his servant were long favorite figures in popular drama. Cf. Bachelor Jenkyn, the comical quack's assistant, in the Cornish drama of *The Life of St. Meriasek* (MS., 1504), and the doctors in the Oxfordshire and Lutterworth St. George plays (reprinted Manly, *Specimens*, I).

modesty of the modern rhymester. The mode of acting of this play is somewhat puzzling, since, instead of being presented continuously on a single platform like others of its class, it is divided into three distinct "stations," corresponding with the acts in a modern drama. The separate prologues and epilogues to each station would suggest some processional form of acting, and this hypothesis seems almost confirmed by the words of the Poeta at the end of the first station:—

> "ffynally of this stacon we mak a conclusyon,
> besechyng thys audyens to folow and succede
> with all your delygens this generall processyon."

Perhaps the fact that the speech in which these lines occur is marked as optional ("Poeta — si placet") may be taken to indicate that the play was destined for presentation, either continuously on a single stage, or in three parts, as circumstances might require.

"The Conversion of St. Paul" abounds in comic matter, introduced into the historical plot in a fashion neither more nor less logical than that which characterizes the early Elizabethan writers of histories and tragedies. After the Poet's invocation and address to the audience, Saulus enters "goodly besene in the best wyse lyke an aunterous knyth [adventurous knight]," breathing threats against the Christians. He secures letters from Caiaphas and Annas in view of his journey to Damascus, and then the stage direction notes: "here goyth sale forth a lytyll a-syde for to make hym redy to ryde," leaving opportunity for a bout of low badinage between his servant and the hostler. The second station, in which the stage is divided between a number of localities, presents Saul's vision, conversion, and baptism. The third introduces, probably as

a late interpolation, a council of devils who learn with roars and cries the desertion of their champion Saul, and resolve to attempt his death. The rest is dull stuff apparently uncongenial to the writer, who breaks off abruptly and sums up the conclusion in an epilogue.

One of the most significant monuments of early English dramatic literature is the long, rambling, and only sporadically readable play of "Mary Magdalene," which combines in a remarkable fashion the types of mystery, miracle play, and morality. The fifty-two scenes were all presented on the same stage, portions of which seem to have been made to represent eleven different places, ranging from Hell to the court of Cæsar and the kingdom of Marcylle.[1] The literary pretensions of all the Digby plays become particularly evident in this, the longest of the series, which, if the last two lines of the Epilogue are to be taken seriously, must be regarded as the first closet drama in English history: —

> "I desyer the redars to be my frynd,
> Yff ther be ony amysse, that to amend."

Notwithstanding this appeal to the reading public, which may, indeed, have been added by the scribe who made the Digby copy, we must suppose the play intended for actual presentation. The first part of the work is predominantly of the mystery type. Tiberius Cæsar, Herod, and Pilate are introduced in the popular braggart rôle, which was by this time become the conventional stage mark of a ruler. Then Mary's history is presented: her father's death; her fall, life in sin,

[1] A conjectural plan of the stage used for the performance of *Mary Magdalene* will be found in V. E. Albright's *Shaksperian Stage*.

repentance; her washing of Christ's feet in the house of Simon the Leper; the death and recall to life of her brother Lazarus; finally, her experiences on the morning of the Resurrection. The second portion of the drama, which partly overlaps the first, is pure miracle play. It narrates the conversion by Mary of the heathen king and queen of Marcylle after several spectacular miracles; the subsequent pilgrimage and adventures of these energetic converts; Mary's retirement into the wilderness and saintly death. The picture of the heroine's alienation from virtue, which is probably the most dramatic portion of the work, is an almost perfect example of the morality play embedded in a foreign setting. Mary's temptation comes as the result of a conference between the great allegorical dignitaries, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, who from their retainers, the seven deadly sins, depute Lechery to decoy her into evil. Lechery entices her victim into a tavern, where in an excellent scene of low realism, Mary yields to the love of the gallant Curiosity.

In range and workmanship "Mary Magdalene" is probably a very fair sample of the drama at the beginning of the Tudor epoch. It is evident that by this time not only the frankly secular guild plays, but also the more conservative sort of drama, which in a sense continued the ecclesiastical tradition and influence, had come to assert artistic independence, and even in some cases a distinct literary consciousness. Comedy mingles everywhere with tragedy in a league unbroken till the Restoration; while in the miracle plays the drama enters a third rich field of wonder and romance, equally remote from the serious realism of Biblical history and from the comic realism of village life, but productive

in future of some of the greatest triumphs of the mature theatre. Stagecraft and stage business have attained considerable development and established permanent conventions, both on the normal fixed and sub-divided platform, and in connection with the more gorgeous processional pageant which resulted from the exigencies of guild presentation. Most significant of all, the "Ludus Coventriæ" and "Mary Magdalene" both show well-developed morality plays arising out of mysteries. The concrete figures of the primitive religious drama are losing their vividness for playwright and for public, and tend either themselves to pass into, or to give place to, moral abstractions. The Herod, Pilate, and Joseph of Skelton's time and Shakespeare's were felt as types, not men, and the ascendancy of the typical in religious drama meant, of course, the triumph of the morality, to which it is time that we turn our attention.

One last important consideration remains to be emphasized. The mystery play, particularly as represented in the great guild cycles, is the only form of English literature which passed essentially unaltered through the early sixteenth-century welter of Renaissance and Reformation. Those drastic reformers of life and letters, Erasmus, Colet, Wyatt, Surrey, Cromwell, and the rest, scattered broadcast new influences and new ideas, but they did not disturb the tranquil conservatism of the Corpus Christi plays. In 1572, the mayor of Chester, John Hanky, "would needs have the Playes (commonly called Chester Playes) to go forward, against the wills of the Bishops of Canterbury, York, and Chester"; and his successor, Sir John Savage, in 1575, "caused the Popish Plays of Chester

to be played the Sunday, Munday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after Mid-sommer-day, in contempt of an Inhibition and the Primats Letters from York, and from the Earl of Huntington." What had been good doctrine to Ranulph Higden in 1328 had become pestilent heresy in the course of two and a half centuries, but the burghers still demanded the old diversion, and they got it in the old form till a newer one was ready.

We know that several of the most popular scenes in the mystery cycles had already established themselves in universal favor and familiarity, when Chaucer was writing the "Canterbury Tales." In the Miller's Tale the poet alludes to the horse-play between Noah and his wife: —

> "'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also
> The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,
> Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?
> Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
> At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
> That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.'".

And of another of the lovers of the fair Alisoun, he says in the same tale: —

> "Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,
> He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye."

What Chaucer had seen, we cannot doubt that Shakespeare had also seen, and the antics of the unfortunate Absolon can hardly have varied much from those of the actors, detested of Hamlet, whom Shakespeare had seen out-Heroding Herod on the guild pageants of Coventry and the boards of a somewhat more advanced London stage.

We are accustomed to think of the Elizabethan drama as a great mushroom growth, evoked over-night, as it were, by special conditions due to Renaissance and Reformation and half a dozen other new impulses. And such it truly was. We shall find it enormously cosmopolitan in its origins, and in its interests extraordinarily contemporary, even ephemeral. This was the character of the age, and it affected other branches of literature in equal measure. But when we come to estimate the sources whence the Elizabethan drama derives the particular vigor and depth of root which it possesses above all the other literary forms of the time, who shall say just how potent was the fact that the drama alone could boast, through the guild plays, an uninterrupted descent from English literature of the Middle Ages? These plays, orally presented throughout the country year after year, form the only real bond of sympathy between the English public of Shakespeare's youth and the great English public of Chaucer's day. Through them passed into the drama a wealth of tradition and sentiment elsewhere intercepted by changes of language, religion, and education. To the conservatism and tenacity of the guild performances Elizabethan drama owes a good deal of the unconquerable national quality, which enabled it to assimilate larger portions of foreign matter than any other literary type of the day and yet remain the most essentially English of them all. The guild plays thus did much to save the drama from that unfortunate discontinuity generated by the upheavals of the early sixteenth century, which in the other branches made it impossible for Spenser properly to appreciate Chaucer or for Ascham to sympathize with Malory.

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(*e*) **Wakefield (Towneley) Cycle.** MS. long in library of Towneley Hall ; now in private possession at Ewell, Surrey. *Editions :* — *Surtees Society*, 1836 ; G. England and A. W. Pollard, *E. E. T. S.*, 1897. Play xxx, F. Douce, *Roxburghe Club*, 1822. *Discussion :* A. Bunzen, *Ein Beitrag zur Kritik der Wakefelder Mysterien*, 1903 ; F. W. Cady, "The Liturgical Basis of the Towneley Mysteries," *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, 1909 ; M. H. Peacock, "The Wakefield Mysteries. The place of representation," *Anglia*, xxiv (1901), 509 ; W. W. Skeat, "The Locality of the Towneley Plays," *Athenæum*, Dec. 2, 1893. A. Ebert : "Die engl. Mysterien, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Towneley-Sammlung" : *Jb. f. rom. u. engl. Lit.*, i, 44, 131. H. A. Eaton : *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xiv, 265, "A Source for the Towneley Prima Pastorum." J. Hugienin : *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xiv, 255, "An Interpolation in the Towneley Abraham Play."

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kirk (*i. e.*, Wakefield) Conspiracio et Capito," *Pul Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, x (1895), 487–557; Craigie, W. A.: "The Gospel of Nicodemus and the York Mystery Plays," *Furnivall Miscellany*, 1901; O. Herrtrich, *Studien zu der York Plays*, Breslau, 1886; F. Holthausen, "Beiträge zur Erklärung und Textkritik der York Plays," *Herrig's Archiv*, 85 (1890), 411–428 (with "Nachträge," *Archiv*, 86); "Zur Textkritik der York Plays," *Phil. Stud. Festgabe für E. Sievers*, Halle, 1896; Kamann, P., "Die Quellen der York-Spiele," *Anglia*, x, 189–226; E. Kölbing, "Beiträge zur Erklärung und Textkritik der York Plays," *Engl. Studien*, xx (1895), 179–220; K. Luick: "Zur Textkritik der Spiele von York," *Anglia*, 22, 384.

3. SCRIPTURAL PLAYS APPARENTLY INDEPENDENT OF THE GUILDS

(*a*) The so-called "**Ludus Coventriae**" cycle. Edited by J. O. Halliwell, *Shakespeare Society*, 1841. Plays i-v. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum.* — *Discussion:* Ernst Falke, "Die Quellen des Sogenannten Ludus Coventriae," Leipzig, 1908; Max Kramer, "Sprache und Heimat des sog. Ludus Coventriae," Halle, a. S., 1892; E. N. S. Thompson, "The Ludus Coventriae," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xxi (1896), 18–20.

(*b*) **Christ's Burial and Resurrection.** Wright, *Reliquae Antiquae*, ii, 124, 1843; *Printed* in *Digby Mysteries*, ed. Furnivall, 1882 and 1896.

(*c*) **Abraham's Sacrifice.** Brome MS. — *Editions:* Miss L. Toulmin Smith, *Anglia*, vii (1884), 316–337, and "A Commonplace Book of the Fifteenth Century," 1886; Walter Rye, *Norfolk Antiquarian Miscellany*, iii, 1887; J. M. Manly, *Specimens*, i, 1897; O. Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, 1909. — *Discussion:* A. Hohlfeld, "Two Old English Mystery Plays on the Subject of Abraham's Sacrifice," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, v, 222–237; F. Holthausen, *Anglia*, xiii (1891), 361.

(*d*) **Abraham's Sacrifice.** Dublin MS. — *Editions:* J. P. Collier, "Five Miracle Plays," 1836 (25 copies); R. Brotanek, "Abraham und Isaak. Ein ME Misterium

aus einer Dubliner Handschrift," *Anglia*, xxi (1899), 21–55. — *Discussion:* C. Davidson, "Concerning English Mystery Plays," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, vii (1892), 339–341.

(*e*) **Candlemas (Childermas?) Day** (Slaughter of Innocents). Digby MS. *Reprinted separately*, Hawkins, vol. i, 1773; Marriott, 1838.

II. Miracle Drama

(*a*) **Dux Moraud**, "einzelrolle aus einem verlorenen drama des 14. Jh.," W. Heuser, *Anglia*, 30 (1907), 180 ff.

(*b*) **Croxton Play of the Sacrament.** — *Editions:* Whitley Stokes, *Transactions Phil. Soc.*, Appendix, 1861; J. M. Manly, *Specimens*, i, 1897; O. Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, 1909.

(*c*) **Conversion of St. Paul.** Digby MS. *Printed separately;* J. M. Manly, *Specimens*, i, 1897.

(*d*) **The Conversion of Mary Magdalene.** Digby MS. Reprinted in part by Pollard, *Miracle Plays.*

(*e*) Lost play of *Kynge Robart of Cicylye*, played at the High Cross, Chester, 1529. Stated to have been previously shown, in Henry VII's reign. Cf. Collier, i, 111–113. Play on same subject acted at Lincoln, 1453.

(*f*) **Cornish Miracle Drama.** *The Life of St. Meriasek, Bishop and Confessor.* Ed. with a Translation and Notes by Whitley Stokes, 1872.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY MORALITY

We have seen in the last chapter that when the Tudor era began, and for a long time after, mystery plays, more or less seriously spiritual in tone, were being produced periodically at York, Chester, Coventry, and in many other localities. There was, to be sure, already a generous infusion in all the cycles of non-religious matter, and the connection of prelate and players was growing more and more that of the proverbial hen and goslings. Still, the break was not open, and the superficial alliance between mystery play and established religion outlived the Reformation by several decades.

Beside the mystery there had grown up, precisely whence or how no man can say, another form of religious drama: the morality or moral play. The difference in the relation of the two types to the Church is great and significant. The mystery was based on revealed religion: it had to do with flesh and blood characters of the Old and New Testament, or in the case of its off-shoot, the miracle play, with superhuman manifestations equally concrete, and for the belief of the time equally authentic. The concern of the morality was with metaphysical theology, with abstract conceptions of good and evil, — with Vices and Virtues of paste-board. Despite the existence of a little good work in a sombre and rather morbid vein, — the probably foreign "Everyman," for example, — the strict

morality is a poor and thin thing altogether. In its natural state it was constructed from the cobwebs of theoretical divinity, and it was inevitable that it should seek, even more than the sturdier mystery, to cure the anæmia of life and character by taking to itself increasingly large portions of vulgar realism and burlesque. As it did so, it became both more robust and coarser. The two or three plots that belonged to the morality repertoire were used over and over, with a smaller spiritual bias at each renovation, till finally their secularization was complete, and they remained merely as props to support a superstructure of unmixed farce.

The debt of the later drama to the mystery consists in the cultivation of general tastes and influences, rather than the evolution of specific models. But the early moralities, shapeless for the most part and artificial as they are, begin a tradition in English comedy, which, though it was almost buried in the accretion of new elements, was not interrupted till the time of the Commonwealth at least. Tragedy, on the other hand, was early crowded out of the morality; and the promise of the mystery with its many tragic potentialities —the promise also of the first stern moralities—came to nought. Hence the deplorable weakness of the earliest Elizabethan tragedy when compared with the vital, if barbarous, comedy of the same period (1558–1585).

The morality seems to be first mentioned under the titles of Paternoster and Creed plays,[1] and in this form

[1] For a statement of the relationship between such plays and the formal doctrine of the heads of the northern church, see E. N. S. Thompson, *The English Moral Plays*, 335 ff.

is of most respectable antiquity, — only half a century younger than the oldest recorded mysteries. We have Wyclif's word, supported by several later references, for the existence of a Paternoster Play "in Englisesh tunge" at York in 1378. We know concerning the contents only that it was "a Play setting forth the goodness of the Lord's Prayer — in which play all manner of vices and sins were held up to scorn, and the virtues were held up to praise." A Creed Play, enthusiastically described as "ludus incomparabilis," is mentioned in connection with the same play-loving city in various years between 1446 and 1568. Lincoln witnessed a *ludus de pater noster* in 1397–1398 and on a number of later occasions. At Beverley, a city of lost plays, we learn that a Paternoster play was given in 1469, apparently on an ambitious scale, since it was presented processionally in eight pageants to each of which four or more guilds were made contributory. One pageant was assigned to each of the seven deadly sins, the last and most elaborate to "Vicious," by whom Mr. Chambers presumes frail humanity (Everyman, Mankind, Genus Humanum) to be typified. Perhaps this spectacle was, however, as much in the nature of tableaux as drama; it is hard to imagine how anything very similar to a morality play could be acted on eight separate stages. Possibly the first seven pageants represented or pictured the triumph of seven virtues over their opposites, while the last in some way summarized the effects, and gave them human application.

Since no example of these early works has been preserved, we know very little of the actual form which the morality took at its inception. The occasion of its origin, however, is not far to seek. The morality is the

last expression of the great mediæval taste for allegory. The mighty convention, which we can trace from its various beginnings in works like the "Psychomachia" of the fifth-century Prudentius, or the machinery of the courts of love, to its ambitious maturity in the "Romance of the Rose," found its last refuge in the religious drama. By the time Chaucer had attained to manhood, the new realism of Italy had pretty well driven allegory from its place in fashionable literature, — never quite to regain it till modernized and revitalized by Spenser. As usual, the professed writers of didactics inherited the form and standards of taste which the more virile profane poets had outgrown. To understand the allegorical machinery of "The Castle of Perseverance," we have only to turn, on the one hand, to the siege of the Castle of Danger by the virtues in the "Romance of the Rose," and, on the other, to the great symbolic poems of "The Owl and the Nightingale," and the "Debate of the Body and the Soul." But, of course, it is a case of contagion, not imitation: we can no more trace the morality back specifically to Prudentius or any single passage of Scripture than we can locate the final source of a mountain torrent.

The earliest morality which has come down to us dates probably from the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is a fragment preserved in an Irish manuscript, but of southern English composition, and has been named in recent times "The Pride of Life." It treats the old theme of the coming of death, — a theme by which the mediæval mind was peculiarly affected, and which offered either the starting point or the dramatic climax of nearly all the oldest moralities. "The Pride of Life" distinguishes itself noticeably

from the other members of the species by its verging toward the concrete. Instead of a single type of humanity thronged about by vices and virtues, as in "The Castle of Perseverance," we find here three distinct individuals: a king, his queen, and a bishop,— all class types, to be sure, but not thoroughly symbolic, and not without personal touches. The play, which is written in quatrains, riming alternately, begins with a conventional exhortation to the out-of-door audience to keep peace and listen in spite of the weather. The manuscript breaks off before the catastrophe. The story concerns the opposition between the inevitable Death and the moral hero of the piece, "Rex Vivus,"— a type of arrogant and comfortable feudalism much like the speaker in the "Dux Moraud" fragment. The contrast is brought out with considerable power, and several of the characters possess elements of life. The nuntius, or messenger, Mirth by name, foreshadows dimly the Vice of the later morality and the Elizabethan clown, though the comic side of his character is rather latent than expressed.

From this fragment, richer in promise than in actual fulfilment, we may turn to what is probably the earliest complete morality extant.[1] "The Castle of Perseverance," preserved with two other notable moralities in the famous Macro manuscript, is a truly formidable work of over thirty-six hundred lines, dating in its editor's opinion from about 1425; written in complex metrical forms, and adorned with all the musty allegorical ornament which the "Romance of the Rose" had familiarized. Yet it has indubitable dignity. Poetically and structurally, it is a creditable produc-

[1] An inconsiderable portion of this play is also lost.

tion, and it is well worth careful study because of its richness of suggestion for the later drama. The plot is developed with a breadth of scope and massive fulness of detail, which inspire the reader's respect, even while they weary him. The story is the career of Man (Humanum Genus) from birth to final judgment. The infant, approached by an evil and a good angel, accepts the counsel of the former, who leads him to Mundus, the World. From Mundus he is sent to Covetousness, where he falls in with all the deadly sins. The Good Angel, however, with the aid of Shrift, ultimately secures his repentance, and lodges him for safety in the Castle of Perseverance, with the seven virtues for garrison. The powers of evil — the World, the Flesh, and the Devil — summon all their forces to a general assault, in which each vice is overthrown by its opposing virtue. Covetousness, however, succeeds in enticing Man from the castle into the world, where he falls again into sin and is at last overthrown by Death. Man's soul appeals to the Good Angel, who directs it to Mercy. The cause is tried before the "Pater sedens in throno," who decides, after a debate, in favor of the benignant virtues of Mercy and Peace, as against Justice and Truth, the accusers.

It has been said that no direct relation can be established on the side of tragedy between the religious play and the Elizabethan secular drama. Sporadic evidences of kinship do occur, as in the analogy between the convention of the good and evil angels, who appear from time to time in the play we are discussing, and the very similar figures in Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus." [1]

[1] The Good Angel interposes in a very similar manner in *The Conflict of Conscience* (cf. p. 000), and was doubtless a perfectly

Here, however, Marlowe has deliberately gone back, as he did in borrowing the masque of the seven deadly sins, to an archaic form of drama for the particular purposes of one play.

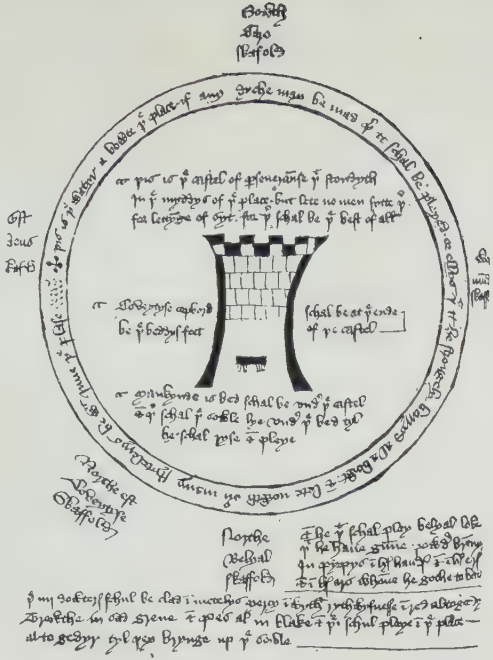
It was on the side of comedy that the influence of the moral play made itself permanently felt. Some of the figures in "The Castle of Perseverance" contain the germs of a species of farce, which was later to run a most illustrious career. "The Castle of Perseverance" is, of course, an essentially serious work, but it is not purely serious, like "Everyman." It has much greater complexity of structure than the latter play. Death and his horrors are not always in our immediate presence. On the contrary, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, with their companion sins, occupy very important positions during the greater part of the drama, and they all have their amusing side. In the speeches of the different vices to Mankind (ll. 1048 ff) we find much of that serio-comic use of the petty details of dress and demeanor, which appears so abundantly in Chaucer and "Piers the Plowman," and which becomes purely comic in the work of Ben Jonson. In the lamentations of the vices over the wounds received in conflict with the virtues, and in the physical chastisement administered by the World, the Flesh, and the Devil to their subordinates for allowing Mankind to escape, as well as in the preparations for war and boastful speeches of the besiegers of the castle, there lay matter for mirth which might be expanded and emphasized

familiar stock figure. A study of the special relationship of *Doctor Faustus* to the English moral play is promised by E. N. S. Thompson. See *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America*, Central Division, 1910.

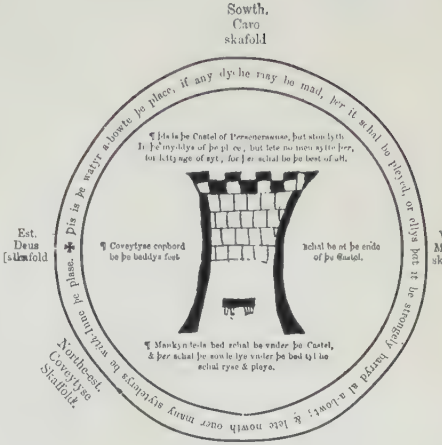
almost *ad libitum*. And the stage directions show that the actors were by no means neglectful of these opportunities. The character of Backbiter, or Detractio, *alias* Flypyrgebet, is a most notable development of the comic possibilities latent in the "nuntius" of "The Pride of Life." In his purely comic function and his equal alacrity to plague vice or virtue, Backbiter shows himself a true prototype of the later Iniquity.

The directions for the staging of "The Castle of Perseverance" are unusually full, and they merit especial attention, because they show certain characteristic features of the Elizabethan theatre already well inaugurated. At the end of the manuscript is an interesting sketch of the stage, with directions for acting. From this drawing and from the three less complex ones contained in the manuscript of the Cornish mystery cycle, eked out by the generous stage directions of the present play, "Mary Magdalene," and several others, it is possible to construct a very definite image of the type of stage used by the early morality players and the performers of the non-processional mysteries. Something has been already said on this subject, by way of anticipation, in discussing the play of "Mary Magdalene," which is perhaps half a century younger than the morality now before us.[1] "The Castle of Perseverance" was played out of doors, on a green. The stage was circular, after the manner of the Cornish open-air theatres, and surrounded by water, "if any dyche may be mad, ther [*i. e.*, where] it schal be pleyed." Otherwise, it was to be strongly barred all about, — evidently to keep the spectators from encroaching. Elizabethan laxity of discrimination between actor and spectator is suggested

[1] Cf. p. 33.



CONTEMPORARY SKETCH (15TH CENTURY) GIVING DIRECTIONS FOR STAGING "THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE"


Sowth.
Caro
skafold
Est.
Deus
[skafold
Westh.
Mund[us]
skaffo[ld].
Northe.
Belyal
skaffold.
Northeast.
Covetytse
Skaffold.
¶ Pis is pe castel of Perseuerannce, pat stondyth in pe myddys of pe pl ce, but lete no men sytte per, for kitty age of syt, for per schal be pe best of alt.
¶ Pis is pe watyr a bowte pe place, if any dyche may be maid, per it schal be pleyed, or elys pat it be strongely warid al a bowt; & late nowth ouer many sytezyns be walkyng pe plase.
¶ Coveytyse cophord be pe beddys fote
schal be at pe ende of pe castel.
¶ Markyn teole bed schal be vnder pe Castel, & per schal pe sowle lye vnder pe bed tyl pe schal ryse & pleye.
¶ he pat schal pleye Belyal, loke pat he haue gunne-powder brennyn[ge] In pypys in his handis & in his eris, & in his ees, wharne he gothe to bat[tel]
pe iiij dowteris schul be clad in mentelys; Merci in wyth, Rythwysnesse in red, al togedyr; Trewthe in sad grene, & Pes al in blake; & pei schal pleye in pe place al togedyr tyl pey brynge up pe sowle.

TYPE REPRODUCTION OF THE OPPOSITE SKETCH

From "The Macro Moralities," *Early English Text Society*, p. 76.

by the direction: "let not over many stytelerys [*i. e.*, stage-managers] be within the place," and the prohibition that no men are to sit on the castle wall lest they obstruct the view of the rest, "for ther schal be the best [seat] of all."

The castle itself occupies the centre of the stage. It is built upon posts or blocks in such a way that the lower part is hollow and affords room for Mankind's bed, under which, in the absence of curtains, the soul (Anima) has to lie concealed through three thousand and eight dreary lines, "tyl he schal ryse & pleye." Around the circumference of the stage, which, of course, would have spectators on all sides, are the five scaffolds or seats of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil (Caro, Mundus, Belyal), Covetousness, and God. The last, occupied by the "Pater sedens in throno" and the Virtues, seems to have been used only for the post-mortem part of the play, except that the Good Angel doubtless retired thither after his various ministrations to Mankind. During the whole of Mankind's life, the occupants of this scaffold would sit as impassive and ostensibly invisible spectators of all the business transacted on the other four scaffolds, in the castle, and the "platea," or unappropriated space between.

There is every reason to believe that a continuous stage tradition subsisted and was passed on from one generation to another from the time when, in this play of "The Castle of Perseverance," it first comes definitely before our eyes, till the end of the pre-Restoration epoch. It will be instructive, therefore, to look with some attention at certain features in the manner of presentation of the work before us. Prefixed to the play, but really forming no essential part of it, is an

interesting prologue spoken by two *vexillatores*. It is the mediæval substitute for the modern posters which announce the coming of a theatrical troupe. After ten long stanzas, recited alternately, in which the argument of the intended play is given, the second *vexillator* makes the following announcement: —

> "These parcellis in propyrtes we purpose us to playe
> This day seuenenyt, be-fore you in syth [sight],
> At — on the grene, in ryall a-ray.
> Ye haste you thanne thedyrward, syris, hendly in hyth,
> All goode neyboris, ful specyaly we you pray,
> & loke that ye be there be-tyme, luffly & lyth,
> for we schul be onward be vnderne of the day."

The first *vexillator* then takes leave in the following words: —

> "Ye manly men of — thus Crist saue you all!
> he maynten youre myrthis, & kepe you fro greve,
> that born was of Mary mild in an ox stall.
> Now, mercy be all —, & wel mote ye cheve."

In the passages just quoted three blanks occur. The first, in the speech of "Secundus Vexillator," must obviously have been supplied by the name of the town where the performance was to take place, while the other two require rather the name of the place of proclamation. Evidently, the *vexillatores* were dispatched a week before each exhibition through all the hamlets in the neighborhood of the selected village to summon an audience. Except for the changes wrought by the invention of printing and the present lamentable cheapness of paper and colored ink, the advertisement of a circus or fair in an agricultural community is now conducted in a surprisingly similar manner. It has been noted that a very similar announcement is

prefixed to the so-called "Ludus Coventriæ" which came to be acted, though not originally so destined, under circumstances probably identical with those we are discussing.

It is of no little importance for the development of dramatic art in England that "The Castle of Perseverance" was performed, as this prologue tells us, not like the great mystery cycles, in one particular place by resident members of various guilds, or by resident clerics, but by more or less professional actors in the way of business, before a number of villages in turn. This seems to me the beginning of theatrical companies in England. The manuscript informs us that there were thirty-six "*ludores*," and thirty-five speaking parts can be actually counted. Under the conditions of presentation it is not easy to conceive much doubling of rôles; and yet, if the company was really itinerant, it would probably have to be much smaller than this to ensure a satisfactory relation between expenses and receipts. It seems most likely that the strollers comprised only a nucleus of the company and that they drafted local amateurs for the minor parts in each place in which they acted, — a practice still adhered to in certain spectacular productions which require a great number of figures. This theory receives some support from Richard Carew's account of the manner in which the Cornish mysteries were presented in the sixteenth century: "The players conne not their parts without booke, but are prompted by one called the Ordinary, who followeth at their back with the booke in his hand, and telleth them softly what they must pronounce aloud." And he adds a story of a practical joke played on the Ordinary by a volunteer actor.

The later moralities were usually performed by companies of four or five men and a boy,—the boy, of course, taking women's parts. These troupes, once formed, continued themselves in unbroken sequence till the Restoration. There seems no doubt that the strolling players of the Commonwealth who roamed from village to village with their contraband dramatic wares, after the suppression of the theatres in 1642, were the lineal descendants, and the inheritors of many a piece of traditional clownage and stage business from those who in pre-Tudor times performed "The Castle of Perseverance." The tradition thus established was one of comedy solely, as I have hinted. The tragic matter in the early moralities — the sometimes really affecting sense of the frailty of mortal man and the constant approach of temptation — was all gradually supplanted. The strollers followed the line of least resistance and greatest popularity, giving their rustic audiences what the latter best liked and what the actors might most readily improvise. Therefore, we find in the early days of Elizabeth a comic tradition so firmly rooted that tragedy might not stand against it. The old gags and witticisms of morality players force themselves not only into weak and colorless tragedies such as "Damon and Pythias," "Cambyses," or "Appius and Virginia"; they find unwelcome admittance, as it were in the teeth of Marlowe's defiance, into "Doctor Faustus" and "Tamburlaine."

In the palmy days of Elizabethan drama the great companies, under the patronage of royalty or nobility, and under the direction of such men as Shakespeare, Burbage, and Alleyn, grew far beyond the slender promise of the troupes that acted "The Castle of Per-

severance." But the difference is one of scale rather than kind. And there existed throughout the period of the great drama and great stage-managers a humbler sort of players, itinerant for the most part, and hounded unmercifully by the law, who seem to have represented a very slight advance in dramatic art over the actors of moralities. Throughout the Elizabethan age, plays appear to have been published for the express use of these strolling companies, — plays demanding simple stage properties and a modest number of actors. Thus, to specify one out of innumerable instances from the earlier period, the title-page of the transitional morality of "Horestes," published 1567, suggests a division of parts by which twenty-five rôles can be filled by six actors: while in the play of "Mucedorus" a full generation later the parts are similarly apportioned among eight players. So, too, the ineffably silly text of Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," printed in 1663, marred equally by timid excisions of passages touching on religion and by the addition of much puerile buffoonery, bears on its face the proof of having been prepared for illegitimate acting during the period of Puritan ascendancy.

It is a mistake to suppose, as is often done, that the early morality stands on a higher plane in the matter of plot construction than the mystery. Theoretically, doubtless, it should have done so; the greater freedom of the morality from actual fact, the removal of the necessity under which the mystery stood of presenting specific Biblical incidents and characters in a particular sequence, ought perhaps to have made the plots of the moralities more flexible and various, — though the essential incompatibility in the drama of fact and fic-

tion is rather an assumption than a certainty. Ultimately, to be sure, the mystery was out-distanced, but only after the morality proper had been supplanted by the "topical" and largely comic interlude. The primitive morality of the type of "The Castle of Perseverance" and "Everyman" is characterized by nothing more than by its lack of ingenuity in the invention of plots. Only three are to be found among the extant specimens of the strict morality. They were for the greater part borrowed from the fashionable literature of the previous age, and the later moralities cribbed even more unblushingly from their predecessors. Plot and situation were handed on from one play to another with little other adaptation than resulted from the not invariable change of name of the characters and the constantly increasing demand for comedy. The three distinguishable plots have been called the Coming of Death, the Conflict of Vices and Virtues, and the Debate of the Heavenly Virtues. The second is both greatly the most popular with morality writers themselves and the only one which contributed anything of much consequence to later drama.[1]

"The Castle of Perseverance," the most comprehensive morality extant, contains and blends with considerable skill all these three plots. In it, therefore, is to be found the entire structural stock in trade of its type. The first part of the play culminates in the conflict of the virtues and vices for possession of Mankind and the castle in which he has taken refuge,—a plot derived, as has been pointed out, from the older secular

[1] A valuable discussion of the various types of morality plots is contained in the introduction to R. L. Ramsay's edition of Skelton's *Magnificence*, E. E. T. S., 1908.

allegory. The second part of the play presents the dramatic crisis in the coming of Death, and then, as the author is unwilling to accept a tragic conclusion, he appends (from line 3030 on) the debate of the heavenly virtues over Mankind's soul, and the final triumph of the powers of compassion.

The huge scope of "The Castle of Perseverance" is thus evident. The single incident of the arrival of death, derived probably from the popular mediæval representations of the Dance of Death, forms the subject of "Everyman" and of the existing portion of "The Pride of Life." The only other example of the "Debate" plot — a belated off-shoot of the *débat* so common and so successfully exemplified in early French and early English secular poetry — is to be found interpolated into the "Ludus Coventriæ" mystery cycle. The history of the morality is really the history of the conflict-plot. It was this which offered the greatest amount of human interest, the greatest opportunity for differentiation of character, and infinitely the largest scope for comedy. All the humorous elements previously pointed out in "The Castle of Perseverance" arise directly from the conflict of vice and virtue.

The late fifteenth-century Macro manuscript, in which "The Castle of Perseverance" is preserved, contains two other moralities. Next in age and in length to that which we have been discussing, and decidedly the least interesting of the three, is the dainty, but certainly not forceful play of "Mind, Will, and Understanding," otherwise known as "Wisdom." The plot of this work is as much distinguished by its slenderness as is that of "The Castle of Perseverance" by its full-

ness. The difference in content and intensity between these two pieces, separated in date of composition by possibly a generation, is most remarkable. In "Mind, Will, and Understanding" nothing whatever of any permanent consequence takes place, but the spectacular effects are much the most elaborate to be found in any of the moralities. The piece is indeed more masque or ballet than drama. There are few indications of the mode of presentation; but it is noticeable that we have to do here with a stage on which the actors can appear and disappear, and that from a total of at least thirty-nine persons only six have speaking parts. These six may represent the five men and a boy of a travelling company, the ballet dancers being impressed each time from among the natives; but the character of the play does not suggest professional or even secular performance. It seems to me much more likely to be a school production, where the dancers would, of course, be carefully trained scholars or choristers, and where the five chief male parts would be taken either by the masters or by advanced pupils. It is to be noted that the piece is thoroughly orthodox throughout. There is a vast amount of good and somewhat tedious doctrine at the beginning and end, while the intermediate humorous portion, though to modern notions somewhat plain-spoken, is all put into the mouth of evil or corrupted characters and so accords perfectly with mediæval proprieties.

The play is introduced by a long dialogue between Wisdom, or Christ, and the Soul. The Soul, subject to the two conflicting forces of sensuality and reason, is instructed to cleave to the latter, and for her guidance is presented with the five wits, — *mutæ personæ* dressed

as virgins, and three "mights," Mind, Will, and Understanding. The good figures go out with operatic dance and song, leaving the stage to Lucifer, who appears "in a devil's array" to exclaim "Owt harow, I rore," and inform the audience of his malign intentions. He then departs, to reappear in the dress of a gallant and seduce Mind, Will, and Understanding, who have in the meanwhile returned. The "mights," easily corrupted to their respective sins of Ambition, Lust, and Avarice, entertain each other with spicy accounts of their forbidden pleasures, till Wisdom enters with admonitions and points out the change their defection has made in Soul, who comes forward "in the most horrybull wyse, fowlere than a fende," with six small boys in the likeness of devils running out from her mantle. At this spectacle the "mights" repent, whereupon the devils disappear, and the piece closes with a homily.

The outstanding fact in the later history of the morality is its decadence as an exponent of serious ideals. Already in the third of the Macro plays, "Mankind," a work dating probably, like the manuscript which contains it, from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, we find the whole moral machinery diverted to the production of buffoonery. Both in scope and in seriousness a great falling off is evident. This play runs to barely nine hundred lines instead of the thirty-eight hundred, approximately, of the complete "Castle of Perseverance"; and the reduction in comprehensiveness is equally radical. Like the latter drama, "Mankind" is clearly intended for professional and nomadic performance. We can even trace roughly the tour of the company through Cambridgeshire and Norfolk by the numerous local allusions. Many changes and de-

velopments, however, can be noticed. The fixed out-of-door stage of the first Macro play has been supplanted, apparently, by the inn-yard, itself in turn the progenitor of the Elizabethan popular theatre. Actors go on and off the stage in the modern manner, and the box-office side of the business attains a prominence entirely novel. Half through the piece, the great master demon, Tutivillus, who has not yet appeared, is heard to shout from behind the scenes: "I com with my leggis vndur me," and the actors grasp the psychological moment of suspense to levy contribution: —

> "Now gostly to owur purpos, worschypfull souerence!
> We intende to gather mony, yf yt plese yower neclygence,
> For a man with a hede that is of gret omnipotens."

The spectators are further assured that the great Tutivillus

> "louyth no grotis [groats], nor pens or to-pens:
> Gyf vs rede reyallys, yf ye wyll se hys abhomynabull presens."

And the collection begins "At the goodeman of this house," *i. e.*, the inn-keeper. The change in the scene of action seems to have carried with it a change of season. The performances on the green could have occurred only in warm weather, but "Mankind" is a winter play, full of references to fires and cold. The reason for the shift is doubtless that which accounts in general for the great permanence of popular customs connected with Hallowe'en, Christmas, and other festivals of cool weather; namely, the fact that winter is in rural communities the season of leisure. It may be, too, that the strolling professionals found their poor efforts eclipsed in summer by the great spectacles of Corpus Christi and the like.

The numerous characters of "The Castle of Perseverance" are reduced in "Mankind" to seven, three of which seem to be boys' parts, while the four men might be decreased to three by doubling the rôles of Mischief and Tutivillus. It is significant that, of these seven figures, five are purely comic: the main vices, Tutivillus and Mischief, and the smaller fry, New Guise, Nought, and Nowadays. The original conception of the morality is upheld only by the generalization Mankind and the single virtue Mercy; nor do these two remain serious throughout the play. They also are pressed into service in the author's attempt to satisfy the ever-growing thirst for comic situations. We are perhaps not obliged to follow Mr. Pollard[1] in assuming that the writer has consciously burlesqued the figure of Mercy. The comedy is probably as little intentional as that occasioned by the impossible heroics of the good people in a schoolboy melodrama. Still the humorous effect is unquestionable, and it shows how thoroughly alien to the spirit of this type of drama had become the moral didacticism from which it sprang.

"Mankind" has as nearly as possible no plot; it touches no special part of the life of man, and it illustrates no truth of character or religion. Its comedy is perfectly devoid of intellectual interest, consisting either of physical horse-play or such plebeian obscenities as only archaism can render tolerable. It doubtless represents very adequately the range of mental activity among the fifteenth-century rustics for whom it was written. It certainly manifests a most striking and melancholy kinship to the species of wit in vogue among the same public to-day, though now fortunately

[1] *The Macro Plays*, E. E. T. S.

restricted to oral circulation. After "Mankind," the type of drama composed for village presentation runs a subterranean course. Indications of its continued existence abound, but we meet with no more examples of it till the Puritan revolution, sweeping away with the theatres all the more refined drama, brings to light again the rude amusements of the yokels.

The three plays of the Macro manuscript, the earliest complete moralities extant, probably define very comprehensively the limits of this type of drama when Henry VII ascended the English throne. It is not to be supposed that the three varieties are at all incompatible. There was doubtless a public for each: one class of society would continue to support the elder and stricter form after another class had demanded and received such debased modifications as "Mankind." The famous play of "Everyman," dating from about the commencement of the sixteenth century, would be conclusive proof of the sustained interest in the earliest type of morality if we could establish its English origin. All indications seem, however, to pronounce in favor of the Dutch composition of this piece, — not least perhaps the fact that "Everyman" stands quite outside the tangle of indebtedness and influence which connects nearly all the native English moral plays, and can be proved neither to have borrowed directly from its predecessors nor to have furnished an important hint to any of its successors.

During the Tudor period the morality gained a position in fashionable literature, and underwent in consequence a special development, which dissociated it equally from the interests of religious teaching and of bourgeois amusement, and rendered it ultimately the principal source of the Elizabethan drama.

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CHAPTER III

THE TUDOR INTERLUDE

It is not possible to distinguish clearly between the morality and the interlude. Both titles are applied, it would seem interchangeably, and from a very early date, to the symbolic class of drama. However, the term "interlude" came more and more to be employed during the Tudor period, as the plays grew shorter and more courtly, and as the gradual disappearance of the religious element rendered the expression "moral play" increasingly a misnomer. By the commencement of Elizabeth's reign, "interlude" and "comedy" are practically the only living terms. If a distinction between morality and interlude is at all to be drawn on the ground of contemporary usage, it will apply, probably, rather to the mode of performance than to the subject matter. Papers in a law-suit concerning John Rastell the printer, about 1530, discriminate between "stage-plays" in summer and "interludes" in winter;[1] where it is evident that the former term designates plays acted in the old morality fashion on fixed out-of-door stages, before a large public, while interludes were performed indoors, generally in private houses and before a limited circle. As might be expected, the profits are mentioned as being considerably greater in the former case. We learn that the same stage costumes were employed in both instances, and it is very likely that a popular morality — if not too long or didactic —

[1] Cf. A. W. Pollard, *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, 316.

might be acted in summer in the ancient manner, and in winter might be made to do double service as interlude at state banquets and upon similar occasions.

This difference is much the same as that which a little later existed between performances in the public theatres and quasi-private performances in the inns of court or the great palaces. The play and the actors might be the same, — many of Shakespeare's plays, for instance, were acted both publicly and privately, — but the ideal requirements differed, and tended to diverge further as time went on. It is interesting that, whereas the great drama of Shakespeare's time developed itself mainly as an answer to the demands of popular performance, the Tudor interlude is directly the product of the private, indoor representations.

The essential requisites of the interlude were brevity and wit. The precise original sense of the word is disputed, but there is no doubt that it was understood in Tudor times to mean a short play exhibited by professionals at the meals of the great and on other occasions where later masques would have been fashionable.[1] Normally the interlude inherited and continued the abstractions of the morality, but there was a tendency toward the introduction of concrete *dramatis personæ*, which in some of the later instances supplant altogether the older allegorical figures. No better account of the circumstances and manner of presentation of a typical interlude can be found than that contained in the fourth act of the play of "Sir Thomas More."

[1] On the derivation of the word, see Chambers, *Mediæval Stage*, ii, 181–183. The term seems first to be used in a dramatic sense in connection with the fragmentary *Interludium de Clerico et Puella* printed from a British Museum MS. by W. Heuser, *Anglia*, xxx (1907), 306 ff.

The mystery play, largely in the hands of the civic middle class, was distinctly bourgeois in spirit, and the primitive morality tended strongly to plebeianism. The interlude, on the contrary, is throughout its career an essentially aristocratic species. As a result, this last type of drama responds with the greatest fidelity to all the conflicting waves of feeling raised by ebb or flow of Tudor Renaissance and Reformation, — manifestations which, as we have seen, hardly affected the conservative mystery. The interlude possessed no *vis inertiæ*. It yielded to the slightest pressure of public opinion, and while keeping in greater or smaller degree the plot outlines inherited from the morality, developed them in the spirit most popular at the moment with its enlightened and progressive public.

It is obvious that the occasions which called into existence this particular modification of the allegorical drama — occasions of special revelry or rejoicing — desired no retention of the grim tone of the strict moral play. Nor would they be satisfied with the crude patchwork of didacticism and obscenity offered to rustic audiences. Very early in the Tudor period, therefore, we find the nature of the morality radically altered. The change was gradual, but it made for catholicity and variety: it substituted for the single interest in abstractions of good and evil a number of different secular interests.

The first stage in the development of the interlude, manifesting itself in the reign of Henry VII contemporaneously with the earliest indications of the Revival of Letters, consists in the mere shift of attention from moral to intellectual abstractions. The play of "Nature," written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Cardinal

Morton, and acted before the latter some time previous to his death in 1500, is essentially a morality of the old type; but it shows variations which are significant. The fact of presentation before an audience alive to the value of time and impatient of boredom has obliged the somewhat prolix author to divide his piece summarily in the middle, deferring the later half to another occasion. There is no artistic reason for the break, which would seem to have been distasteful to the poet, since he closes his first instalment of fourteen hundred lines with the plaintive remark: —

"And for thys seson
Here we make an end,
Lest we shuld offend
Thys audyence, as god defend
It were not to be don.
Ye shall vnderstand neuer the lesse
That there ys myche more of thys processe
Wherein we shall do our besyness
And our true endeuure
To shew yt vnto you after our guyse.
When my lord shall so deuyse
I shalbe at hys pleasure." [1]

"Nature" purports to deal with man's passage through the world from infancy to old age, with his vari-

[1] That Medwall was by no means unduly solicitous concerning the patience of his hearers is shown by an anecdote relating to his lost play of *The Finding of Truth* performed before Henry VIII some fifteen years later (at Richmond, Christmas, 1514–1515). On this occasion an extant document informs us that "Inglyshe, and the others of the Kynges pleyers, after pleyed an Interluyt, whiche was wryten by Mayster Midwell, but yt was so long yt was not lykyd. . . . The foolys part was the best, but the kyng departyd befor the end to hys chambre." Cf. Collier, i, 69 (ed. 1879).

ous lapses into sin and his ultimate repentance; but the theme is discussed from a purely ethical, not religious standpoint. There is no question here of God or Devil, Heaven or Hell, in the Christian sense. Rather, the supreme power — under "Th' almighty god that made eche creature" — is Nature, who begins with a long preamble describing mundane phenomena and exhorting Man to study "Arystotell, my phylosopher electe." As in "Mind, Will, and Understanding," man is said to be governed by the hostile forces of Reason and Sensuality; but these powers no longer appear absolutely good or evil, symbols of God and sin respectively, as in the earlier play.[1] To the author of "Nature," Reason and Sensuality are both necessary, but the force of Reason is to be kept in the ascendancy. Man sins, not because he alienates himself from God, but because he dethrones Reason. "Nature" is an elaborate piece, doubtless performed by choir-boys. The first half contains ten speaking parts, the second eighteen, of which, however, those representing the seven virtues and the less prominent vices are very slight. The prevailing dreariness of the play is mitigated by some fairly good scenes of low comedy.

In "Nature," which dates from about the middle of the reign of Henry VII, we note the substitution of semi-pagan, renaissance ethics for the religion of the morality. In a slightly later play of the same type the new influences in scholarship are reflected even more strongly. "A new interlude and a merry of the Nature of the Four Elements, declaring many proper points of philosophy natural, and of divers strange lands, and of divers strange effects and causes," was written by John

[1] Cf. p. 62.

Rastell and probably published by him.[1] A reference to "the noble king of late memory, The most wise prince, the seventh Herry," puts the date of composition later than Henry VII's death in 1509; while another allusion to new lands found westward "now within these twenty years" would, if taken literally, date the play before 1512. It is rather more probable, however, that the author refers to the discovery of the new lands, not by Columbus, but by Americus Vespucci and by Cabot, both of whose voyages, in 1497 and 1498 respectively, are elsewhere mentioned. If this be so, the end of the twenty-year period would be 1517–1518, the years apparently immediately preceding the publication of this "new" interlude.[2]

There is no religion whatever in "The Four Elements," but the work contains an amount of intellectual edification which is stupendous. The characters are the following: A Messenger, Natura Naturata, Humanity, Studious Desire, Sensual Appetite, a Taverner, Experience, and Ignorance. "Also," we are told, "if ye list, ye may bring in a Disguising." At the beginning appears in true dissertational manner a statement of the cosmographical theses to be maintained; viz., "Of the situation of the four elements, that is to say, the earth, the water, the air, the fire, and of their qualities and properties, and of the generation and corruption of things made of the commixtion of them.

"Of certain conclusions proving that the earth must

[1] The ascription of authorship depends upon John Bale. Cf. article on Rastell in *D. N. B.*

[2] The extant edition is dated 1519 by Hazlitt (*Dodsley*, vol. i) on the doubtful authority of a manuscript insertion in the fragmentary British Museum copy.

needs be round, and that it hangeth in the midst of the firmament, and that it is in circumference above 21,000 miles, etc."

In a long prologue of nearly one hundred and fifty lines, the Messenger introduces this

> "little interlude, late made and prepared —
> Which of a few conclusions is contrived,
> And points of philosophy natural,"

deploring the poverty of learned works in the English tongue as compared with the Greek and Latin, and the tendency of ignorant writers

> "New books to compile and ballads to endite
> Some of love or other matter not worth a mite."

The plot is negligible. Nature, Studious Desire, and Experience all take turns in unfolding to Humanity, with the aid of a globe, the secrets of this earth and of the visible universe. For a time the pupil plays truant, and goes off with Sensual Appetite, Ignorance, and the Taverner to feast and revel; but his enjoyment, like that of the reader, is half-hearted, and he is easily won back to the pursuit of knowledge. Some effort is made at spectacular effect in the way of comic song and dance, but this is, like the Disguising, which is to be brought in "if ye list," only a sop to the spectators, who, as the author very justly feared, might not otherwise endure his tedious instruction. That the piece was felt to trespass on the patience of its hearers is evident from the title-page, which admits that if played in full, it "will contain the space of an hour and a half; but if ye list, ye may leave out much of the sad matter, as the Messenger's part, and some of Nature's part, and

some of Experience's part, and yet the matter will depend conveniently, and then it will not be past three quarters of an hour of length." It is evident that this Tudor audience has advanced very far beyond that which was content to witness "The Castle of Perseverance," when it declines to put up with too much "sad" matter, and prefers not to be detained above three quarters of an hour.

Several other educational interludes exist. John Redford's undated play of "Wyt and Science" relates the rather lamentable adventures of the foolish young Wit, who sets out to woo and marry his natural complement, Science, daughter of Reason and Experience. In his wanderings he is grievously mauled by the giant Tediousness, and gulled by Idleness and Ignorance; but he is saved at last from error, avenges himself with the aid of his servants Instruction, Diligence, and Study, upon the giant, and wins the lady Science. The contemporary popularity of this rather dull piece is attested by the existence of two imitations. "The Marriage of Wit and Science," licensed for publication in 1569–1570, shows the taste for allegory on the wane. Wit, Will, and several of the other characters are pretty concrete personages, and the author has evidently tried hard to evolve a romantic plot out of his unadaptable material. Tediousness, in particular, is changed from a pedagogical symbol into a bogey of nursery tale proportions, and he here plays somewhat the rôle of dragon to Science's Andromeda and Wit's Perseus. The careful division of this piece into acts, and the employment of the typically Elizabethan alexandrines and "fourteeners" in place of the older irregular verse, bear out the indications of spirit and tone in showing

the play to have been written very shortly before it was published.

Another interlude apparently indebted to Redford, and one of the most interesting of its class, is "The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom," written by one Francis Merbury,[1] and prepared for publication in 1579,[2] though probably composed somewhat earlier. This play also shows allegory largely neglected in the new interest in plot and character. There are a great number of figures, but the author is careful to suggest how all the parts can be filled by six actors. With equal consideration he has sought to explain the weaknesses and inconsistencies in Wit's character by making him son to the ill-matched couple, Severity and Indulgence. Wit suffers in this work truly double measure for all his follies, since in addition to the giant, who is here called Irksomeness, he falls into the hands of a new and most accomplished mischief-maker in the person of "Idleness the vice." There is really little but the bare shell left of the old academic allegory. Six of the figures — Catch and Snatch, Mother Bee, Lob, Doll, and Search — have no connection with the symbolical part of the story; and Idleness himself so far belies his name that he is almost the only person in the drama who displays a proper energy. The poet has managed to get into the piece enough of irrelevant farce and melodramatic interest to make it tolerable reading: it is

[1] The identification of the author rests upon the concluding words of the manuscript, "Amen quoth fra Merbury."

[2] The manuscript is not known to have been actually printed before 1846; but that publication was intended is clear from the general form of the MS. title-page and from the phrase "neuer *before* imprinted."

much the most engaging of the three related plays, and at the same time the least faithful example of the interlude.

The changed spirit which came into fashionable drama with the Renaissance is well illustrated in "The World and the Child," printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522. This play takes over the plot of the old moralities with no such conscious adaptation as is seen in those we have just been discussing, but develops it in what was for the drama an entirely new spirit. The ostensible scope of "The World and the Child" is almost as great as that of "The Castle of Perseverance," from which, directly or indirectly, it may have derived the story. It treats Man's life from childhood to old age, his progress through the successive steps of sin, his repentance, relapse, and final conversion by Conscience and Perseverance. But the old theme is elaborated with considerable novelty. The first striking feature is the tendency to condensation; only five characters appear, and man's whole career is disposed of in nine hundred and seventy-nine lines. The attitude toward life is entirely altered from that of the mediævalist authors of "The Castle of Perseverance" and "Everyman." This world is no longer a vale of sorrows. It is a place of manifold experiences, unedifying for the most part, no doubt, but full of the most unquestionable zest. Except for the last pages, where the poet reverts to the conventional conclusion, the representation is no longer didactic: it is truly dramatic. We find the teeming life of the city where before we met abstractions of virtue or vice. Realism has here progressed far beyond that universal peasant scurrility which plays so great a part in "Mankind." It has become definitely pictorial

Drollery has taken to itself a local habitation, and the spectator is presented for perhaps the first time in English drama with a somewhat comprehensive view of the actual life of London streets. There is nothing new, of course, in this genre. All that we find in "The World and the Child" can be found more abundantly in "Piers the Plowman" and in Chaucer. There has even been pointed out recently a most interesting specific indebtedness of the play to an early fifteenth-century poem called "The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life."[1] But the transference of this spirit from narrative to dramatic poetry is an important step. It shows the interlude awaking to a sense of the inherent interest of actual life, and heralds from afar a long line of realistic comedies such as "Bartholomew Fair," "The Puritan," and "The London Prodigal."

There is no doubt that "The World and the Child" was written *con amore*. In some way the hackneyed theme is freshened for the reader, and the life of Man is given a novelty in each of its six stages of Dalliance, Wanton, Lust-and-Liking, Manhood, Shame, and Age. As examples of the new tone one might instance young Wanton's description of his own character: —

> "If brother or syster do me chyde,
> I wyll scratche and also byte;
> I can crye and also kyke
> And mocke them all be rewe.
> If fader or moder wyll me smyte,
> I wyll wrynge with my lyppe
> And lyghtly from hym make a skyppe
> And call my dame shrewe";

[1] See H. N. MacCracken, "A Source of Mundus et Infans," *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xxiii (1908), 486 ff.

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and the wonderfully infectious stanza in which Manhood turns his back upon the straight and narrow path:—

"Now I wyll folowe Folye,
For Folye is my man.
Ye, Folye is my felowe
And hath gyuen me a name:
Conscyence called me Manhode,
Folye calleth me Shame."

"Hickscorner," printed like "The World and the Child" by Wynkyn de Worde, but without date, belongs to the same general type of reduced and secularized morality. It has been regarded as a controversial play in defence of the Roman Church, a theory which receives support from the definite references to the contemporary irreligious state of England and from the names given to the vices.[1] Its realism is of the localized London sort found in "The World and the Child," and it represents a still farther advance in structure. There are here six characters: three vices (Hick-scorner, Imagination, and Freewill) pitted against three virtues (Pity, Contemplation, and Perseverance). The awkward lay-figure, Mankind, has been boldly thrown overboard, and the play moves the more lightly without him. We have thus the elements of a true dramatic conflict where the actors contend whole-heartedly by reason of some cause of opposition within themselves, and the suggestion of dogs snarling over a bone in the shape of poor mortality's soul is no longer forced upon us.

[1] Professor Creizenach finds a noteworthy similarity, which I do not fully perceive, between *Hickscorner* and *The Interlude of Youth*. Cf. *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, iii, 503, 504.

All the writers of interludes based on the morality plot of the battle of vices and virtues were confronted with this problem: what to do with the central figure, Mankind, a character much too vague and comprehensive as he stood either to be individualized in accordance with the new requirements of dramatic action, or to be reduced into proportion with the smaller scope and more trivial interests of the fashionable interlude. The author of "The World and the Child" begs the question by virtually splitting Mankind into six parts and treating each separately. The author of "Hick-scorner" throws him out altogether and sacrifices with him the cohesion of the play, though the gain in vividness compensates on the whole for the injury to the plot. The more popular and successful course, however, was to select for treatment one particular division of Mankind's history, and to devote the attention solely to that. The division selected was naturally that of youth, which offered freest play alike to the educational and to the melodramatic propensities of the time. Mankind, reduced to Youth, becomes a sufficiently tangible conception, with definite faults and follies, and yields abundant opportunity for individualization.

Two well-known plays in this manner are "The Interlude of Youth" and "Lusty Juventus," both of which deal with the seduction of their hero by the temptations proper to his age and with his ultimate conversion. It is unfortunate that both these pieces, written relatively late, during the heat of the final Reformation struggle, and championing the causes of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism respectively, have too much interest in the polemics of the hour to develop fully the dramatic possibilities of their subject.

This is especially the case with the anti-popish "Juventus," which devotes pages to exposing the fallacy of the doctrine of salvation by works, and to reprehending the idolatrous practices of the mediæval church. For all that, "Lusty Juventus" contains two of the finest songs to be found in the pre-Elizabethan drama, and its main comic scene was paid the compliment of plagiarism by the author of the mock interlude in "Sir Thomas More."

The argumentative tone of these last two plays is shared by a considerable group of interludes belonging to the period of the Reformation, which concern themselves rather with opinions than with morals, facts, or manners. The dramatic framework is here filled out, not with discussions of pedagogical import, or with humorous matter derived from the follies of common life, but with satire directed against particular theories in religion or politics. It was natural that this species of interlude should keep itself somewhat closer than the others to the form of moral allegory from which they all descended. Symbolic abstractions could here be put to use in a way hardly possible elsewhere.

The first important political allegory in the form of interlude is the "Magnificence" of John Skelton. Just as we have seen the stock abstractions of the old drama shifted in plays like "The Four Elements" and "Wit and Science" from the domain of religion to that of knowledge, so here we find them introduced into the arena of state-craft. The central figure is no longer frail and sinful mankind; he is Magnificence, a worldly prince, surrounded by good and evil counsellors, drawn into extravagance and misgovernment by the advice of self-seekers, and rescued finally from the ensuing

embarrassments by his true advisers. The date of this play is about 1516, the period of Wolsey's greatest power, and there can be little doubt that its intention was to point out the danger of the latter's ambitious and wasteful policy at home and abroad, while covertly championing the side of Skelton's patron, the Duke of Norfolk, and the older nobility. The characters are all political types with such names as Felicity, Liberty, Measure, Counterfeit Countenance, Crafty Conveyance, Cloaked Collusion, and Courtly Abusion. The work extends to more than twenty-five hundred lines, and, like the not dissimilar Scottish "Three Estates" of twenty years later, is too intricately constructed to be easily summarized.[1]

The religious controversy of the later years of Henry VIII and the animosities incident to the reigns of Edward VI and Mary were prolific of dramas which, under cover of abstract figures, supported one or another of the factions in Church and State. Such was, doubtless, the lost play of Lord Governance and Lady Public-Weal, acted at Gray's Inn, Christmas, 1526–1527, and described in considerable detail by the chronicler, Hall.[2] Wolsey, imagining that a satire against himself was intended, imprisoned the author, John Roo, and one of the actors in the Fleet, whence they were released upon the explanation — perhaps not altogether true — that the play had been "compyled for the moste part . . . 20 yere past, and long before the Cardinall had any authoritie." A little later in the same year (November 10, 1527) a Latin play pre-

[1] See the admirable introduction to the play, by R. L. Ramsay, in the Early English Text Society edition.

[2] Hall's *Chronicle*, ed. 1809, 719.

sented before the King and the French ambassadors introduced satirical portraits of the "errytyke Lewter" and of Luther's wife among more conventional figures like Religion, Ecclesia, Veritas, Heresy, False Interpretation, and Corupcyo-scryptorris (*sic*). A strong Protestant animus evidently inspired the lost plays of Thomas Wylley, Vicar of Yoxford, Suffolk, who in a letter addressed to Cromwell about 1535 appeals for support against the hostility of the conservative priests of his county, and mentions four polemical dramas of his composition: "A Reverent Receyvyng of the Sacrament . . . declaryd by vi chyldren, representyng Chryst, the worde of God, Paule, Austyn, a Chylde, a Nonne called Ignorancy"; "a play agaynst the popys Counselers, Error, Colle Clogger of Conscyens, and Incredulyte"; "A Rude Commynawlte"; and "The Woman on the Rokke, yn the fyer of faythe a fynyng, and a purgyng in the trewe purgatory."

The same spirit appears in several extant works of unambitious scope. "The Booke in Meeter of Robin Conscience: against his Father Couetousnesse, his Mother Newgise, and his Sister Proud Beautye" is not a play. It is composed in rime royal stanzas of very artificial structure, and consists of three separate debates between Robin Conscience, apparently an apostle of the new religion, and each of his worldly relatives. A stronger controversial tone pervades two contemporary dialogues, embedded in prose polemical matter and clearly not intended for presentation. The "brefe Dialoge betwene two prestes servauntis named Watkyn and Jeffraye" makes up the principal portion of the bitterly anti-Wolseyan "Rede Me and Be Not Wrothe," printed at Strassburg in 1528; and "A

proper dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and a husbandman eche complaynynge to other their miserable calamite through the ambicion of the clergye," published in 1530 "at Marborow in the lande of Hessen," also, of course, by an English religious exile, was curiously supplemented by "an olde [Lollard] treatyse made aboute the tyme of kynge Rycharde the seconde."

A much more genuine dramatic value attaches to the interlude of "John Bon and Mast Parson," a piece containing only about one hundred and seventy lines and introducing merely the two interlocutors named in the title. The topic of this dialogue is the theory of transubstantiation and the resultant feast of Corpus Christi, — matters which, as has been seen, had powerfully influenced the earliest forms of English drama. The author of "John Bon" has combined, not unsuccessfully, the dialogue form and rough wit of Heywood with Bale's sharpness of religious argumentation, and his work, short and unpretending though it is, is one of the most pleasing of the theological interludes of the period.

A somewhat later and vastly more important example of controversial drama is the "merye enterlude entitled Respublica, made in the yeare of our Lorde 1553, and the first yeare of the moost prosperous Reigne of our moste gracious Soueraigne Quene Marye the first." The original list of the *dramatis personæ* is interesting: —

The Partes and Names of the Plaiers.
The Prologue, a Poete.
Avarice allias Policie, the vice of the plaie.
Insolence, " *Authoritie*, the chief gallaunt.

Oppression allias *Reformation*, an other gallaunt.
Adulation " *Honestie*, the third gallaunt.
People, representing the poore Commontie.
Respublica, a wydowe.
Misericordia, Veritas, Iusticia, Pax } fowre Ladies.
Nemesis, the goddes of redresse and correction, a goddesse.

"Respublica" is a play political rather than sectarian. There is interesting, though not convincing reason for the theory that it was written by Nicholas Udall, the author of "Ralph Roister Doister."[1] The plot concerns the sufferings of the widow Respublica, the Commonwealth of England, and her servant People at the hands of the rapacious counsellors who during the last two reigns had despoiled the Church and wasted the revenues of the Crown. At last, of course, Nemesis steps in, in the person of Queen Mary, whereupon the false stewards are revealed in their true characters and are forced to make restitution of their ill-gotten gains.

The opposite side in the controversy was ardently espoused by John Bale, who spent two periods of Catholic ascendancy (1540–1547, 1553–1558) in exile by reason of his violently expressed religious views; and, for doubtless the same cause, was preferred during the Protestant reign of Edward VI to the bishopric of Ossory in Ireland. In three strange "interludes," generally referred to in abbreviated title as "God's Promises," "John Baptist," and "The Temptation of our

[1] See L. A. Magnus, Introduction to E. E. T. S. ed., xii-xxii.

Lord," all said to have been written in 1538, Bale has curiously blended the mystery and the morality form into a vehicle for the exposition of his anti-papal doctrine. A fourth play with the same polemical bent shows considerably higher artistic development. "A Comedy concernynge thre lawes, of Nature, Moses, and Christ, corrupted by the Sodomytes, Pharysees, and Papystes" claims to have been composed like the rest in 1538, but references to King Edward, Queen Katherine, and "the noble lorde protectour" in the concluding stanzas show these at least to have been written after 1547, while the concluding words of the colophon, "lately imprented per Nicolaum Bamburgensem" may indicate that the piece was published on the Continent during Bale's second exile. "The Three Laws" is perhaps the most vigorous, as it is certainly one of the most carefully composed of all the Tudor controversial interludes. Bale, who claims the distinction of having first domesticated in English drama the terms "comedy" and "tragedy," is also one of the earliest writers to introduce the Latin division of plays into acts; and "The Three Laws" shows perfect comprehension of the capabilities of the five-act structure. Act I permits *Deus Pater* to introduce the three laws and assign to each a period of guardianship over mankind. The next three acts present successively the subversion of each of these laws by the embodiment of evil, Infidelity, and his satellites; while the fifth brings the dénouement in the appearance of God's Vengeance, the banishment of Infidelity, and the rehabilitation of the Laws. The reference to Sodomites and Pharisees in the title is delusive. Bale's concern is exclusively with the Papists, whom he makes responsible, not only

for the burning of Christ's Law, but for the leprosy of the Law of Nature and the blinding and laming of that of Moses as well. The six corrupting agents, "vyces or frutes of Infydelyte," are all exponents of Romish wickedness, and Bale is careful that their garb shall betray their character to the spectators. Idolatry is to be "decked like an old witch [*i. e.*, a vender of relics], Sodomy like a monk of all sects, Ambition like a bishop, Covetousness like a spiritual lawyer, False Doctrine like a popish Doctor, and Hypocrisy like a Grey Friar." Bale's most famous play, "King Johan," breathes the same spirit, but is so peculiar in form as to demand discussion in the next chapter. Meanwhile the general dramatic method and the religious tenets of the earlier plays were taken over without noticeable change by the unknown Protestant author of "New Custom," who would seem consciously to have adopted Bale as his model.

Beside the work of Bale, it is proper to consider the production of another coarse, yet sturdy and strikingly individual expositor of papal corruption. Sir David Lindsay's "Satire of the Three Estates" — as nearly as possible contemporaneous in its different forms with the period of Bale's dramatic activity— is a poem which stands quite apart from the line of English stage progress by reason of its uncouth irregularity of form, and still more by its restriction to the Scots dialect and the social and political milieu of Edinburgh. Yet its imposing bulk and weight of thought, its boldness in meeting empirically the unsolved problems of histrionic presentation, and the neatness with which it offers commentary and contrast to such works as "Magnificence," "Respublica," "The Three Laws,"

and "King Johan," make it an important document in the history of even the southern British drama.

"The Three Estates" appears to have been first acted before King James V of Scotland at Linlithgow, January 6, 1540. For a later performance at Cupar in Fife, June 7, 1552, a number of additions and local references were introduced, and it is substantially in the form there presented that the work survives. A repetition of the play two years later (1554), on the playfield at Greenside near Edinburgh, seems to have involved no important change in the text prepared for Cupar of Fife. The only complete version of the poem was printed at Edinburgh by Robert Charteris in 1602; but an important manuscript, dating from 1568, includes a selection from the more comic portions, and derives special importance from the fact that, although it purports to be based on the text used at Greenside, it preserves the only extant version of the preliminary interlude which advertised the Cupar of Fife performance. This "Proclamation Maid at Cowpar of Fyffe" is the precise equivalent of the introductory "banns" which had been employed a full century before to announce the prospective exhibition of "The Castle of Perseverance" and of the mystery cycle known as "Ludus Coventriæ."[1] The people of the neighborhood are warned of the intended arrival of the Prince and the Three Estates in "Cowpar Town," and are further informed: —

> "Our purpose is on the Sevint day of June,
> Gif weddir serve, and we haif rest and pece,
> We sall be sene intill our Playing place,
> In gude array, abowt the hour of sevin."

[1] See pp. 19 and 55–57.

Let the public, therefore, get up "right airly" and "disjune" (*i. e.*, breakfast), and

> "Faill nocht to be upone the Castell-hill
> Besyd the place quhair we purpoiss to play,"

and let them be prepared both for "sad" matter and for bantering.

It is necessary to turn back to "The Castle of Perseverance" to find in English drama any parallel to the tremendous scope of this play with its two hundred solid pages of verse, its equal appeal to the whole range of contemporary society from king to peasant, and that grand mediæval leisureliness and simplicity which give it courage to attack the entire visible fabric of life from the highest problems of morality and government to the lowest reaches of profane wit. It is no question here of the small indoor stage and a select number of courtly auditors. The theatre is the "playfield" out of doors, the spectators make up the entire population, and the actors number at least forty. The scene is imagined so broad that messengers make journeys and return from one side of it to the other, and a dozen localities can be represented on it concurrently. The king sits high upon his throne and sees only afar off the petitioners who would have audience with him; a small boy finds false relics in a field upon a hill and shouts to his master in the crowd below; and the stocks stand in view through the entire performance, receiving now the good and now the evil characters. About this primitive stage, as around that on which "The Castle of Perseverance" was acted, stands a ditch filled with real water, in which the Sowter's Wife can wade waist-deep, and into which the cheated Poor Man tosses the Pardoner's relics.

It is interesting to contrast the structure of this Scottish work with that of the only English moral plays of the century which at all approach it in length and satiric purpose — Skelton's "Magnificence" and Bale's "Three Laws." While Skelton, by sticking doggedly to the thin and inadequate frame of the interlude, has made his poem, however dull and over-weighted, a regular and, technically, even a rather admirable example of morality architecture; and while Bale introduces from classic act and scene division the support which he needed for his ambitious satire, Lindsay ignores equally the old and the new dramatic models, and wins attention by sheer force of intellect and unreasoned brilliance of execution. Independent farcical dialogues, or "interludes," as long and as non-moral as those of Heywood, are inserted at will in the intervals between the sections of a flagellation of ecclesiastical hypocrisy and greed more violent even than Bale's; and the long work wanders on with only a thin thread of story and with no observable law of growth. Yet "The Satire of the Three Estates" is a more readable play than either "Magnificence" or "The Three Laws." The very frankness of its irregularity disarms criticism and piques the attention; and the photographic sincerity of all its pictures, whether of clownish turbulence or aristocratic vice, largely justifies the inclusion of each and goes far to keep the varied elements from clashing.

Lindsay had good reason to entitle his work as he did. It is as satire rather than as drama that it gains its effects; and it traces its literary ancestry, not through the sequence of the moral plays, but by way of the satiric dialogues of Dunbar, back to the art form

of Langland. In many details of treatment, indeed, reminiscence of "Piers the Plowman" seems clearly evident, as in the conception of the vices, Flattery, Falsehood, and Deceit, and the portrayal of their relations with the temporal and spiritual classes, and in the development of the figure of John the Commonweal. It was natural that so long a work, so little guided by rules of structure, should flag in interest toward the end. The play falls into two parts, with an intermission during which the people were to make collation. When acted at Greenside the entire performance extended from nine in the morning till six o'clock at night, and the Cupar proclamation, which announces the beginning for seven o'clock, suggests pointedly that the spectators "ordane us gude drink agains ellevin," when the first part should be finished. Overburdened though it is with characters and inadequate in motivation, a very fair interest attaches nevertheless to this first part, which depicts the fall of Rex Humanitas, beguiled by evil followers, under the influence of Dame Sensuality; the advancement of disguised Flattery, Falsehood, and Deceit; the banishment of Good Counsel; and the imprisonment of Verity and Chastity, together with the final overthrow of the evil powers upon the arrival of Divine Correction. The second part, however, which contains the author's boldest strokes and accounts for the name of the poem, is in all its serious portions rather narrative than dramatic, and except here and there makes flat reading. The tedious account of the proceedings of the Parliament, with the long story of the wrongs of John the Commonweal and Pauper, the exposition of the subtle shifts of the members of Spirituality, and the

final rehearsal of the fifteen Parliamentary acts form dull matter in a play; and the student who arrives ultimately at the execution of the three malefactors and the escape of Flattery finds himself seriously befuddled concerning all the dramatic issues.

The most famous of all interlude writers is John Heywood (?1497–?1580), who departed boldly from every tradition of subject and treatment, and produced a style of drama frankly satiric and amusing rather than didactic. Heywood's plays are literary in a sense in which few other interludes can be called so. While absolutely independent and original in his relation to native dramatic models, Heywood is almost reactionary in his adherence to mediæval themes, and has been shown to owe a very considerable debt to the French farce of his day.[1] After discarding as uninteresting or plebeian the usual subjects of the English drama, he is forced to supply their place either from abroad or from what were in his day the only standard conventions in secular English literature, — those of Chaucer's age.

The simplest of Heywood's plays is a mere *débat* in riming couplets, preserved in a signed manuscript of the poet, and intended, as the Epilogue indicates, for presentation before the King himself. The academic question of the relative happiness of the "Witty" and "Witless" states is argued, first by James and John, then by John and Jerome. Only at the end of eight hundred lines of clever casuistry does the poet succeed in proving the lot of King Solomon preferable to that of the court fool, Will Somer.

[1] See K. Young, "The Influence of French Farce upon the Plays of John Heywood," *Modern Philology*, ii (1904).

Identical in metre[1] with "Witty and Witless" is another dialogue of greater dramatic merit, to which Heywood has so far only a conjectural claim. "Gentleness and Nobility," "A dyaloge betwen the Marchaunt, the Knyght, and the plowman, dysputyng who is a verey Gentylman," seems to me in a number of details to bear the marks of Heywood's peculiar method, and it undoubtedly shows an advance upon that author's "Witty and Witless." Whereas the three disputants of the latter piece are entirely unindividualized, the three speakers in "Gentleness and Nobility" are carefully endowed with the contrasted class characteristics upon which Heywood relies for his main effect in nearly all his more developed dramas, and which he employs with especial cleverness in the "Play of the Weather." "Witty and Witless" is a rather dull composition, displaying no knowledge of the rules of stage action and indicating a positive incapacity to deal with more than two of the *dramatis personæ* at a time. Thus, one of the three figures is always completely neglected, while Heywood is presenting the dispute of the other two. The author of "Gentleness and Nobility," on the contrary, has a mastery of dramatic technique, which everywhere suggests Heywood's more ambitious plays. The speakers are brought on and off the stage with perfect naturalness; the interplay of speech and action is that of the adept in arranging stage situation; and the break in the middle of the piece, necessitated by the short patience of the audience, is so managed as to avoid every indication of artificiality or incoherence. One has but to compare the deliberate skill

[1] Each is written in rough riming couplets, with an epilogue in rime royal.

manifested in the division of "Gentleness and Nobility" with the sheer awkward amputation of Medwall's "Nature" in order to realize the presence of that new artistry in plot manipulation which is generally regarded as Heywood's great contribution to English dramatic progress.

Heywood's authorship of "Gentleness and Nobility" is rendered the more probable by a relationship which seems not hitherto to have been noted. Like "The Pardoner and the Friar" and "The Four P's," and unlike any other known drama of this epoch, "Gentleness and Nobility" is marked by a very close imitation of the work of Chaucer. The entire moral of the piece is taken from the Wife of Bath's Tale, and the specific verbal plagiarism in several passages is hardly less striking than that manifested in the two accepted works just mentioned.[1]

In the "Play of Love," Heywood harks back to the old subtleties and refinements of the courts of love. The four characters are thus named: The Lover not Beloved, The Woman Beloved not Loving, The Lover Beloved, Neither Lover nor Loved. The last figure, who is elsewhere termed the "vyse," gives the play all the little liveliness it possesses. The contents can well be imagined. They may in Heywood's time have amused an audience of fine ladies and court gallants, as they would certainly have been more likely to do two centuries earlier, but there is little reason why a student of the drama should linger over so patent an anachronism.

The most carefully worked out of Heywood's plays, and the most original, is the "new and very merry in-

[1] See, further, my article in *Modern Language Review*, 1911.

terlude of all manner weathers," devised, probably, in flattery of Henry VIII.[1] Instead of the three or four characters in his other works, Heywood here introduces ten, all of whom are on the stage simultaneously in the concluding scene. The *dramatis personæ* embrace Jupiter, the all-wise and affable sovereign; Merry Report, the vice, whose genially comic figure has lost all savor of the fire and brimstone originally attaching to it; and a collection from the different types of humanity; a gentleman, a merchant, a forest-ranger, a water-miller, a wind-miller, a gentlewoman, a laundress, and a boy "the least that can play." This motley assemblage is brought together by a proclamation of Jupiter, desirous once for all to settle mundane meteorology, that all persons interested in the weather should declare their preferences. The clash of conflicting interests is amusingly depicted. The gentleman thinks of his hunting, the merchant of his sailing vessels, the forester of his windfall perquisites, the water-miller and the wind-miller have high words over the need of rain and wind respectively. The gentlewoman, anxious for her complexion, finds herself at odds with the laundress, who clamors for hot sunshine; and the small boy comes in as emissary from his fellows to demand unlimited snow-balling. Jupiter reconciles the contending suitors and makes clear to the audience the supreme wisdom of his own arrangements.

In the plays of "Love" and "Weather" it is possible to discern the vague influence of the morality in the "vice," who still remains, though greatly altered and humanized. In the other interludes of Heywood even

[1] Concerning the source, see J. Q. Adams, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, 1907, 262.

this resemblance disappears, and the reader finds himself conveyed back by subject-matter and spirit of treatment to Chaucer and fourteenth-century realism; while in dramatic method he is being carried forward — thanks to the poet's individual genius and to his imitation of the French — to a plane of technical skill and conscious art considerably higher than that attained by any of Heywood's contemporaries. In "The Pardoner and the Friar," the "Mery Play between Johan Johan the husbande, Tyb his wyfe, and syr Jhan the preest," and the famous "Four P's," there is nothing which suggests either the ancient morality play or the religious and social conditions of Heywood's time. Doubtless Heywood, in whom the controversialist seems to have been submerged in the entertainer, and whose sympathies lay certainly with the less aggressive papal party in the Reformation conflict, found it safer and pleasanter to avoid the burning questions of theological dispute, so fully treated by Bale, and to restrict himself to trite and harmless themes such as the impostures of pardoners, friars, and palmers, or the amorous lapses of the parish clergy. Page after page in these dramas is plagiarized from the "Canterbury Tales." There is nowhere a turn of thought or plot unfamiliar to readers of Boccaccio and Chaucer; but Heywood makes up for the uninventive archaism of his subject by progressiveness in presentation. In his interludes English realistic comedy attains full growth.[1] The mustard seed of buffoonery, found almost

[1] The most interesting survival of the particular type of interlude evolved by Heywood in *John John* is probably the play of *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, which exists only in a "second impression," dated 1661. As the final prayer for the "noble Queen" shows, the work

by accident in the mystery and the early morality, has completely choked the more serious matter. Comedy required at this period, not stimulation, but refinement, — deepening and idealization. These elements were added in time, but they were not to be found in native drama, and their gradual introduction manifests itself in a number of hybrid productions, which begin as mere expressions of the playwright's craving for greater variety of subject, and end by bridging the chasm between the incoherent native interlude and the largely exotic and thoroughly self-conscious, but still essentially national comedy of Elizabeth's reign.

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must date from before the death of Elizabeth, and it is probable that it belongs to an even earlier period. *Tom Tyler* combines a reminiscence of the morality convention in "Desire, the Vice" and the "sage Parsons," Destiny and Patience, with a very Heywoodian farcical plot of village types. Evidently, however, the genuine dramatic interest in this piece was subordinate to the operatic appeal of the seven long songs which the author manages to introduce within the small compass of nine hundred lines.

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III. INTERLUDES OF POLITICAL PURPOSE

SKELTON, JOHN: **Magnificence**, n. d. *Reprinted*, J. Littledale, *Roxburghe Club*, 1821; A. Dyce, *Poetical Works of Skelton*, 1843, vol. i; R. L. Ramsay, E. E. T. S., 1908 for 1906. (*Lost Plays of Skelton: Nigramansir*, cf. Warton, *History of Eng. Poetry*, ed. 1871, iii, 287; *Interlude of Virtue*, and *Comedy Achademios* mentioned in Skelton's "*Garlande of Laurell.*")

LINDSAY, SIR DAVID: **Satire of the Three Estates.** Text preserved in

(*a*) Bannatyne MS., 1568. Selected comic portions. Ed. Hunterian Club—

(*b*) *Printed*, Robert Charteris, Edinburgh, 1602. Complete, except for Cupar of Fife "Proclamation."

Reprinted in Lindsay's Works, ed. Chalmers, 1806; ed. D. Laing, 1879; ed. F. Hall, E. E. T. S., 1869.

Respublica. MS. 1553. *Facsimile*, Farmer, 1908. *Printed*, J. P. Collier, *Illustrations of Old English Literature*, i, 1866; A Brandl, *Quellen*, 1898; L. A. Magnus, E. E. T. S., 1905; J. S. Farmer, "*Lost*" *Tudor Plays*, 1907.

[To this class probably belonged the lost play by John Roo, acted at Gray's Inn, Christmas, 1527–28, which treated the separation of Lord Governaunce and Lady Publike-wele by means of Dissipation and Negligence. Cf. Hall's account, quoted by Collier, vol. i, 103.]

IV. INTERLUDES OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

BALE, JOHN: *Dramatic Writings*, ed. J. S. Farmer, 1907.

God's Promises. Two early editions known:—(*a*) ed. without date; (*b*) 1577. *Facsimile* of (*a*), J. S. Farmer, 1908.

Reprinted, *Dodsley*, all editions ; *Everyman and other Interludes*, 1909.

John Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness. Ed., n. d. *Reprinted*, *Harleian Miscellany*, i, 97, 1744; 2d ed., 1808, i, 101.

The Temptation of Our Lord. Ed., n. d. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1909. *Reprinted*, A. B. Grosart, *Misc. of Fuller's Worthies Library*, i, 1870.

The Three Laws. Two early editions are known: —

(*a*) n. d. ("per Nicolaum Bamburgensem") *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1908.

(*b*) 1562, printed for Th. Colwell. (*a*) *Reprinted*, A. Schroeer, *Anglia*, v (1882).

John, King of England. MS., Chatsworth. *Facsimile*, *Materialien*, xxv, 1909. *Printed*, J. P. Collier, *Camden Society*, 1838 ; Manly, *Specimens*, i, 1897.

New Custom. Ed. 1573. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1908. Reprinted, *Dodsley* (Reed & Collier, vol. i; Hazlitt, vol. iii).

Robin Conscience. *Reprinted*, W. C. Hazlitt, *Early Popular Poetry*, iii.

John Bon and Mast Parson. Printed by John Day and Wm. Seres, n. d. *Reprinted*, J. Smeeton, W. H. Black, *Percy Society*, xxx, 1852.

[To this class seem to have belonged also the four plays mentioned as his own by Thomas Wylley: "A Reverent Receiving of the Sacrament," "A Rude Commonalty," "The Woman on the Rock," and a play against the "Pope's Counsellors." Cf. Wylley's letter to Cromwell, quoted by Collier, i, 129, 130.]

V. Interludes intended for Amusement only

Heywood, John : *Dramatic Writings*, ed. J. S. Farmer, 1905.

The Play of Love. Two early editions are known :—

(*a*) Ed. 1534. Copy in Magdalene College, Cambridge. Wm. Rastell.

(*b*) Incomplete copy in the Bodleian. John Waley. *Facsimile* of (*b*), J. S. Farmer, 1909. (*b*) Reprinted, Brandl, *Quellen*, 1898. *Discussion:* W. W. Greg, *Archiv*, 106 (1901), 141–143.

Play of the Weather. Two early editions : —
(*a*) Ed. 1533. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1909. Wm. Rastell.
(*b*) Ed. 1565 ? *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1908. Anthony Kytson. Reprinted, A. Brandl, *Quellen*, 1898; A. W. Pollard, *Representative English Comedies*, 1903. *Discussion :* F. Holthausen, "Zu John Heywood's Wetterspiel," *Herrig's Archiv*, 116 (1906), pp. 103, 104 ; J. Q. Adams, "John Heywood's Play of the Weather," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, 22, 1907.

The Pardoner and the Friar. Printed, Wm. Rastell, 1533. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1909. *Reprinted*, F. J. Child, *Four Old Plays*, Cambridge, U. S. A., 1848 ; Hazlitt, *Dodsley*, i, 1874.

John John the Husband, Tyb his Wife, and Sir John the Priest. Ed. 1533–34. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1909. *Reprinted*, Chiswick Press, 1819; Brandl, *Quellen*, 1898 ; A. W. Pollard, *Representative English Comedies*, 1903 ; J. S. Farmer, *Two Tudor Shrew Plays*, 1908.

The Four P's. Three early editions : (*a*) Printed by Wm. Myddleton ; (*b*) Wm. Copland ; (*c*) John Allde, 1569. *Facsimile* of (*a*), Farmer, 1908. *Reprinted*, *Dodsley*, all editions ; W. Scott, *Ancient British Drama*, 1810, vol. i ; Manly, *Specimens*, i, 1897.

Witty and Witless. MS., signed by Heywood. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1909. *Printed*, F. W. Fairholt, *Percy Society*, xx, 1846 (abridg. ed.).

General Discussion of Heywood : Wilhelm Swoboda, "John Heywood als Dramatiker," *Wiener Beiträge*, 1888 ; Karl Young, "Influence of French Farce upon the plays of John Heywood," *Mod. Phil.*, ii (1904) ; W. Bang, "Acta Anglo-Lovaniensia. John Heywood und sein Kreis." *Engl. Stud.*, 38 (1907), 234–245.

Of Gentleness and Nobility. Two parts. Printed, without date, by John Rastell. *Facsimile*, J. S. Farmer, 1908. *Reprinted*, J. H. Burn, 1829 ; J. S. Farmer, *Early English Dramatists*, 1908.

Tom Tyler and His Wife. "An Excellent Old Play, as It was Printed and Acted about a hundred Years ago. . . . The second Impression. London, Printed in the Year, 1661." *Reprinted*, F. E. Schelling, *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xv (1900) ; J. S. Farmer, *Six Anonymous Plays* (2d Series), 1906 ; *Malone Society*, 1910.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERLUDE IN TRANSITION

At a period roughly synchronizing with the commencement of Queen Elizabeth's reign (1558) and the birth of Shakespeare (1564), the native interlude began to be supplanted as the fashionable and progressive type of drama by plays of different character and for the most part of foreign origin. But the interlude was much too deep-rooted either to be discarded at once or to be easily merged in the newer forms. Plays of allegorical content deriving immediately from the morality remain common till the accession of James I, while in Thomas Nabbes's "Microcosmos" (1634) the species crops up again very near the end of the Caroline era.

Most of these late interludes are intrinsically dull. The shift in popular dramatic interest deprived them of the opportunity for natural evolution; they merely repeat the old stock incidents and devices, and there is no longer any jauntiness in their plagiarism. The poverty in content and lack of resourcefulness natural to the entire morality species appear nowhere more glaringly than in these last survivals of the type. Such threadbare motives as the quarrels of vices and virtues or the masquerading of vice under the cloak of virtue are retained for mere convention's sake, sometimes to the positive detriment of the action and sense. However uninteresting in itself, the decadent interlude is yet the necessary object of study for all who would

trace the rise of the popular Elizabethan drama. In it is manifested that gradual blending of moribund native convention with foreign importation and rash experiment, through which was finally consummated the art form of Shakespeare and his fellows, — a form thoroughly national, on the one hand, and in the best sense conservative, while, on the other hand, it lent itself to the freest extension of range and the freshest treatment of new themes.

The systematic classification of the transitional interludes is a work of impossibility, for the extant specimens display neither continuity of type nor, very often, any trace of literary consciousness. They arose during a period which had largely given up the old canons of criticism, and had not yet attained to new ones, and they are almost exclusively the production of amateurs, — spontaneous off-shoots from the ancient dramatic stock, affected in every conceivable degree and manner by the new features which the more deliberate dramatists were busied in grafting upon it.

The lately recovered play of "John the Evangelist" is probably an early example of the transitional tendency in the interlude.[1] Though the work belongs formally to the old species of moral allegory, there is no real purpose either in the symbolism or in the religious

[1] *John the Evangelist* has not been satisfactorily dated. The activities of the printer of the extant edition, John Waley, seem to have extended from 1546 to 1586. Eugenio's speech, "By my fayth ye shall be hangeman of Calys," points to a date previous to the loss of Calais in 1558, and the general style of the piece likewise indicates the reign of Mary as the latest possible period of composition. It is perhaps hazardous to accept the entry — "1 saint jon euuangeliste en trelute [? enterlude]" in the *Day Book of John Dorne* as proving this play's existence in 1520. See *Malone Soc.* ed.

teaching. Of the six speakers — St. John, Eugenio, Irisdision, Actio, Evil Counsel, and Idleness — only the last three are in any true sense allegorical, and their function is almost purely comic. There exists hardly a trace of plot or dramatic action. Evil Counsel and Idleness have nothing to do with any of the other characters. They come in like clowns in a variety show, to regale the audience with a comic dialogue and the narration of various farcical experiences, and go out, not to reappear. Eugenio and Actio behave indecorously in the earlier part of the play and repent at the close of St. John's discourse, but they stand for no particular vices, and are not in any special degree antagonists of the good characters, who themselves are so little differentiated as to leave room for doubt whether the author intended to represent in St. John and Irisdision two persons or one.[1]

In the absence of any definite knowledge concerning the sources of this drama, it is not easy to conjecture what can have suggested to the poet the names John the Evangelist, Irisdision, and Eugenio. The last is particularly striking as an apparent indication of the tendency to replace symbolic appellations by concrete names drawn from history or romance. However, Eugenio's character fails to justify the romantic promise of his name. He is but a weak variation of the usual type of vicious youth, who, though able to scoff feebly at the pious Irisdision, is in the end so much disquieted by that sage's lurid picture of the dangers of the primrose path of dalliance as to require much

[1] Cf. H. Bradley, *Mod. Lang. Review*, July, 1907; W. H. Williams, "Irisdision in the Interlude of Johan the Euangelyst," *Mod. Lang. Review*, July, 1908.

encouragement from Actio before he can betake himself with any zest to vicious courses.

It is noticeable that this play, which would seem to have been composed by a mild supporter of the old religion, is as far from championing any sectarian belief as it is from pointing a specific moral. Whether from excess of prudence or lack of originality, the author expresses his conceptions of good and evil with a truly mediæval vagueness. The way to the Castle of Zion passes, according to Irisdision, over the mead of meekness to the path of patience, thence to the lawn of largeness, and the lane of business; while the "via obliqua" leads to death and the lady of confusion, who is called Babylon. The description of the isle of sin is so thoroughly in the tone of Langland and the fourteenth century that it is difficult to believe the play a genuine product of the Reformation epoch: —

> "With bowes and trees it is meruaylously paled.
> There groweth the elders of enuye
> Staked with pryde full hye,
> And the breres of bakbytyng with wrath wrethed aboute
> Full of slouthy busshes and lecherous thornes drye,
> With glotonous postes and couetyse rayled throughoute,
> And at myscheues gate many dothe in ronne."

A considerable group of interludes, extending throughout the entire reign of Elizabeth, deal with problems arising out of fluctuations in fortune. Several of these, like the earlier "Magnificence" and "Respublica," have, besides their economic interest, a more or less distinct political bias. Such is the play of "Wealth and Health," entered on the Stationers' Register, July 19, 1557, though the concluding prayer for Queen Elizabeth shows that the extant edition cannot be

earlier than November 17, 1558. The plot narrates ramblingly and somewhat confusedly the misfortunes of Wealth, Health, and Liberty, the three glories of the English nation, at the hands of the vices, Ill Will and Shrewd Wit, who by means of "waste and war" bring them to destitution, disease, and captivity, till in the end they are relieved by Good Remedy. A seventh member of the *dramatis personæ* is of much importance. Hans Beerpot, the drunken Fleming, though occasionally referred to as typifying War, is a concrete personage who cuts a rather surprising figure among the abstractions of the piece. He is brought upon the stage soliciting in an impossible Dutch jargon the post of cannoneer, and is heartily reviled by all the other speakers, good and bad. Ultimately he gets his dismissal from Good Remedy, who accuses him of spiriting away Englishmen's wealth to Flanders by means of war. "There is too many aliants in this realm," says Good Remedy pointedly, and concludes, regardless of Hans's protestations of love for the English: "Get thee hence, drunken Fleming! Thou shalt tarry no longer here." The satire of the play seems to be directed specifically against the very unpopular and expensive war in Flanders during the year previous to Mary's death (1557–1558). But back of the allegorical significance of Hans, who as Flemish War causes the dissipation of English Wealth, there lies a more general satire upon the pushing and deceitful alien, — a class excessively hated during the entire Tudor period. In this attack there is nothing allegorical or symbolic. The swaggering foreigner who oppresses native merit was one of the commonest butts of the realistic comedy. The first two acts of "Sir Thomas More" represent the

rising against the Lombards on Ill May Day, and outbreaks against the Flemings themselves were certainly no less violent during Elizabeth's reign than in the time of Chaucer, when "Jakke Straw and his meynee," as that poet tells us ("Nun's Priest's Tale," ll. 575–577) "wolden any Fleming kille."

That the figure of Hans was successful is shown by the reappearance of the character, supported by a duplicate, Philip Fleming, in Ulpian Fulwell's "Like Will to Like," first printed in 1568. This last production, entitled in full "Like Will to Like, Quod the Devil to the Collier," is on several accounts one of the most striking of the later interludes, and would seem to be solely responsible for several generalizations of modern writers about the type. It shows the morality stuff already half absorbed in realistic comedy, and it attests in its author both a considerable skill in the production of stage effect and a colossal effrontery in plagiarism. The sixteen characters are pretty equally divided between moral abstractions like Virtuous Life, God's Promise, and Good Fame, and low comic types such as Tom Tosspot, Ralph Roister, Pierce Pickpurse,[1] and Tom Collier. The vice of this play, Nichol Newfangle, is the most imposing of his class. He rallies the audience with all the assurance of a star comedian, and patronizes Lucifer himself. He compasses a good deal of petty knavery, and suffers at least partial retribution from two of his dupes; but he manifests throughout all the *aplomb* of Autolycus, whom, indeed, he much resembles when he comes upon the stage with

[1] For an explanation of the pun implied in this name, where Pierce is to be pronounced "Purse," see H. N. MacCracken, New York *Nation*, 86 (1908), 146.

"a bag, a staff, a bottle, and two halters, going about the place, showing it unto the audience," and singing, "Trim merchandise, trim, trim; trim merchandise, trim, trim." And finally, no whit dismayed, he takes his leave of the spectators, and rides off to hell, like his imitator in Greene's "Friar Bacon," on the devil's back.

Another play, dealing, like "Wealth and Health," with changes of fortune, is the "Newe Interlude of Impacyente Pouerte," newly imprinted in 1560 by John King, where the titular hero, entering very "impatient" and unmannerly indeed, is reformed into Prosperity by the virtue Peace. Later, however, he is beguiled by Envy, disguised as Charity, and Misrule in the garb of Mirth, and is by them delivered over to Colhazard, the gambler, who rooks him of two thousand pounds. The metamorphosis back to Poverty thus easily accomplished, the hero is deserted by his deceivers and left to the harsh usage of a very Chaucerian Sumner, only vaguely identified with the abstraction Falsehood, from whom Peace at length delivers him.

To this same dramatic class, and to the same period, belongs apparently the play of "Albion Knight," licensed to Thomas Colwell in 1565–1566. This piece, which is known, unfortunately, only from a single fragment containing six leaves out of the earlier portion, dealt to an even greater extent than "Wealth and Health" with political matters. The extant lines are mainly concerned with the elaboration of a plot whereby the vices, Injury and Division, hope to separate Albion from Justice, and prevent his marriage with "fayre dame plentie," the daughter of Peace.

The contemporary "Trial of Treasure," printed in 1567, is one of the most inconsequential of Tudor

dramas. The title has little appropriateness, for Treasure appears only in the last third of the work, and is never brought to actual trial. The play seems lacking in plot and purpose, possibly because the key to its topical or political allusions has been lost; but it contains some excellent snatches of song and several striking situations. Such, for example, are the spirited wrestling match between Lust and Just, and the shackling of the vice, Inclination, whom the redoubtable Just leads forward in the final scene, bridled like Tamburlaine's "pampered jades of Asia."

The most conspicuous feature of the last interludes is their pronounced tendency, when free from outside influence, to revert to the general form and tone of the early morality. As the species lost its hold upon the fashionable public, it passed naturally out of the hands of non-moral, professional entertainers like Heywood into those of unprogressive, leisurely poetasters, who appear to have belonged largely to the clerical profession, and whose object was more frequently edification than amusement. Thus, the artificial conditions which produced the compression, simplicity, and wit of the interlude of Henry VIII's reign were removed, and there resulted during the early years of Elizabeth a very marked relapse toward the tedious rambling structure, multiplicity of characters, and large homiletic infusion which belong to fifteenth-century works like "The Castle of Perseverance," "The Conversion of Mary Magdalene," "Wisdom," and "Nature." This change was, of course, an evidence of decay. The expansion of the Heywoodian norm of eight or nine hundred lines and four or five well-individualized figures into long, slow-moving works, averaging two

thousand lines and employing from fifteen to forty characters, was but a process of fatty degeneration which accompanied the loss of sinew and vitality.

Four excellent examples of this last phase of the strict moral play are preserved from the first quarter of Elizabeth's reign: Lewis Wager's "Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene," 1566; George Wapull's "Tide Tarrieth No Man," 1576; T. Lupton's "All for Money," 1578; and an undated work of the same period by W. Wager, "The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art." In all these compositions one misses entirely the dramatic skill and high evolutionary possibilities of the secularized, abbreviated interludes of the previous half-century, while one feels still more strongly the absence of that representative character which makes many of the most diffuse and formless fifteenth-century moralities social documents of the highest value. Thus destitute as they were both of dramatic power and of popular intellectual appeal, the stray Elizabethan remnants of the old type found themselves against a dead wall, with no possible chance of continuance or progress, while the vigorous theatrical current of the day was deflected by various alien influences, and passed from Heywood to Lyly, Kyd, and Marlowe by the way of certain experimental medleys which will demand discussion in the later portion of this chapter.

Yet the moribund species represented by the four dramas named above does not merit the entire disregard which has often befallen it. Though they did nothing to advance English dramatic art, these plays reflect many characteristics of earlier practice. Furthermore, they were evidently written with great care

by well educated, if untalented, authors, and they illustrate not inadequately the general level of poetic taste and metrical achievement during the rather barren period between Tottel's "Miscellany" (1557) and the appearance of Spenser (1579).

"A new Enterlude, neuer before this tyme imprynted, entreating of the Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene. . . . Made by the learned clarke Lewis Wager," was printed in 1566, after having been entered on the Stationers' Register during the same year. A second edition appeared in 1567. Though certainly belonging to the morality class, this play varies in a number of particulars from the ordinary type, and bears pretty clear witness to the influence of John Bale. In agreement with the usual practice of the latter poet, the allegorical figures appear in connection with real Biblical incidents and with certain concrete characters. Thus, in the play before us, eleven symbolic actors are associated with the three historic personages of Mary Magdalene, Simon the Pharisee, and Christ. Again, the vice, Infidelity, bears the same name as in Bale's "Three Laws," is similarly represented as the leader of the powers of evil, and in both plays shows only the most incidental traces of comedy. The great difference between Bale and his apparent imitator lies in the much less strongly marked controversial tone of the latter. Wager, indeed, is known to have been, like Bale, an Anglican clergyman, — he was rector of Garlickhithe in 1560, — but his play breathes no such fiery anti-Roman polemic as the dramas of the other poet; and this moderation of theological doctrine, while largely accounting for the flatness of "Mary Magdalene" in comparison with "The Three Laws,"

points also to a later period of composition. It seems to me likely — in disagreement with the opinion of the editor of the play — that Mary Magdalene was composed after the heat of religious controversy had subsided, and not long, probably, before its publication.

The piece opens with an interesting defence of acted plays and a remonstrance against the Puritan detractors of the histrionic "faculty." Yet everything shows how utterly impossible it must have been for such a production to gain the attention of the captious audiences which the earlier interludes had amused. Through a total length of more than twenty-one hundred lines the interest steadily declines. The only readable portion is that which depicts the perversion of Mary by the vices of Infidelity, Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal Concupiscence; and this portion extends little beyond the first third of the play. The rest is a peculiarly tame rehandling of Scriptural narrative, with no central plot or clearness of character portrayal. Difficult to read, and nearly intolerable, one would suppose, to witness, the drama fails equally in each of the two qualities which had served to animate the earlier interludes. Though it possesses a few realistic touches, of which the best are the exclamations of Mary upon her ill-made, "bungarly" garments and her inattentive waiting maids, there is little conscious attempt at humor either of incident or character. Nor, on the other hand, do the vices — Infidelity and his satellites — make up for their comparative deficiency in comic interest by that close connection with contemporary evils in church and society which gives point and dramatic effectiveness to the similar creations of Bale.

"The Tide Tarrieth No Man," registered October

22, 1576, and published in the same year, is thus a decade subsequent to Wager's "Mary Magdalene" in the date of its appearance; and it stands perceptibly nearer to realistic comedy. Its eighteen *dramatis personæ* are divided between allegorical abstractions and such type figures as the Tenant, the Courtier, and the Sergeant. In Greediness the Merchant the two categories are united. The scene is distinctly laid in contemporary London, and the interest of the piece is wholly economic, rather than moral, historic, or polemical, so that the play finds its most natural position as a continuation of the species represented by "Respublica" and "Wealth and Health." Though only a couple of hundred lines shorter than Wager's moral-Biblical drama, and hardly less confused in plot, the present work, which the title-page states to have been "compiled by George Wapull," is a considerably more entertaining production. It has at least the merit of a single definite theme: the injury done to the community by the inhuman rapacity of the usurers and merchants of the day. This theme is set forth in the Prologue, and it is illustrated through the whole course of the drama in the misfortunes of an impoverished courtier, a tormented tenant, and a debtor arrested while attending a preaching at Paul's Cross. The play ends conventionally, but most unrealistically, with the intervention of Christianity *in propria persona*, supported by Faithful Few, Authority, and Correction. The action is complicated by the intrusion of a plot suggestive of interludes of foreign influence like "The Disobedient Child," [1] in which are presented the consequences of the rash marriage of Wastefulness with

[1] See p. 125 ff.

the maid Wantonness. Wastefulness is soon brought to destitution; and in a scene strikingly like one of Spenser's is being tempted by Despair "in some ougly shape" to kill himself "with Cord or with knyfe," when Faithful Few rescues him and puts the monster to flight by means of prayer to the Heavenly Father.[1]

The vice of this play, Courage, is decidedly the most interesting in the group, and he speaks nearly one third of the lines of the drama (585 out of 1879). The entirely a-moral tone of the work is well indicated by the fact that Courage, though he has command of the Barge of Sin, and though he is finally led away to jail by Correction after much pernicious activity, does not symbolize any theological vice, and, as the author very candidly admits, may incite to good as well as evil. It is evident that the tendency of the mediæval moralists to divide all mundane phenomena into the two rigid groups of the righteous and the unrighteous — a tendency which we have found the author of "Nature" already tacitly questioning on the very threshold of the Renaissance [2] — has in this play of Wapull entirely broken down. And it was this mediæval root-idea of the essential hostility and incompatibility of the forces of good and evil upon which was based the entire morality convention.

"The Tide Tarrieth No Man" illustrates well the metrical peculiarities of this group of late interludes, — the wreckage, as it were, of the old morality fashion. The construction of the strict pentameter line, though

[1] Cf. *Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto ix, stanzas 49–54; and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, ll. 630 ff.

[2] See p. 73.

known to Skelton,[1] seems hardly to have been understood by these authors. Instead, they employ the depraved measure into which the Chaucerian pentameter had broken during the fifteenth century, — a metre consisting most often of four stresses, with an indefinite number of slightly accented syllables. The difference between assonance and rime seems also hardly to have been appreciated; imperfect rimes abound. Otherwise, however, these plays are written with an excess of care. Wapull gives greatest prominence to the quatrain form with alternate rime, almost precisely half his play being written in that measure. Riming couplets are employed through another quarter of the work (four hundred and fifty lines), less, probably, because of any lighter tone in the dialogue than from the simple desire of variety. Rime royal — the conventional aristocratic seven-line stanza — appears in about two hundred lines of especial gravity: in the author's Prologue (1–56); the laments of the "Tenaunt tormented" (794–835), the impoverished courtier (1082–1116) and the arrested debtor (1393–1406); and in the first long speeches of Christianity and Faithful Few (1440–1488). One entire scene, that between Courage and Wilful Wanton, or Wantonness (ll. 836–967), is written in a metrical freak, — quatrains with a single rime (aaaa, bbbb, etc.).

Three song measures are used with skill: aabccb (57–158), ababcc (291–311), and ababccdd (1337–1358). The period to which this play belongs, the earlier half of Elizabeth's reign, was essentially a lyric period, and the four songs introduced into the piece far exceed the

[1] The best discussion of Skelton's use of metre for dramatic purposes will be found in R. L. Ramsay's edition of *Magnificence*.

body of the text in literary merit. It is only, indeed, in such snatches of song as the following that one recognizes Wapull and his companions for what they were, — serious-minded littérateurs conscientiously writing up to the height of the artistic standards of their age: —

"We haue great gayne, with little payne,
And lightly spend it to:
We doe not toyle, nor yet we moyle,
As other pore folkes do.
We are winners all three,
And so will we bee,
Where euer that we come a:
For we know how,
To bend and bow
And what is to be done a.

"Though Wastfulnesse and Wantonnesse,
Some men haue vs two named:
Yet pleasauntnesse and plyauntnesse,
Our names we haue now framed,
For as I one is pleasaunt, to kisse and to cully,
The other is plyaunt as euer was holly.
As Youth would it haue,
So will we be braue."

T. Lupton's "Moral and Pitiful Comedie Intituled All for Money. Plainly representing the manners of men and fashion of the world noweadays" (1578) is related in its contemporary and economic interest to a number of the works hitherto discussed, and like several of them, it seems to have attempted to ensure itself against uncertainty concerning the proper dramatic model by a mixture of characters and incidents from all the known fields. Its huge total of thirty-one *dramatis personæ* is made up partly from Scripture direct, as in the case of Dives, Judas, Satan; partly

from religious allegory (*e. g.*, Godly Admonition, Pride, Gluttony); partly from scholastic terminology (Theology, Art, Science). Figures such as Learning with Money, Learning without Money, Money without Learning, Neither Money nor Learning suggest the old *débat*, which we have seen revived by Heywood in "Witty and Witless" and the "Play of Love." Social types are presented in Prest for Pleasure and Swift to Sin; while realistic comedy is frankly introduced in Gregory Graceless, William with the two wives, Nichol Never out of the Law (a rich franklin), Mother Croote, and Sir Laurence Livingless, the foolish Romanist parson, who decries the Reformation and the translation of Scripture. Those who sat through the sixteen hundred lines of this play witnessed a performance in no way less comprehensive or spectacular than the modern variety entertainment. All the costumes were striking, and some of the feats of prestidigitation veritably astounding. One scene presents with a vividness not easily surpassed a pessimistic view of the consequences of wealth. Money enters with great boasts of his power over all conditions of men, and seats himself in state to receive the homage of his follower, Adulation. Suddenly he is overcome with sickness, and the stage direction explains, "Here Money shal make as though he would vomit, and with some fine conueyance Pleasure shal appeare from beneath, and lie there apparelled." Money goes out, leaving his son Pleasure to undergo the same distressing ordeal, whence arises Sin, the vice. Sin inherits the family disease and vomits Damnation, who is to be "finely conueyed as the other was before, who shal haue a terrible vysard on his face and his garment shal be

painted with flames of fire." The titular hero of the piece, "All for Money," is a venal magistrate, who proclaims through the vice Sin, that all suitors coming in the name of Money, "Be their matter neuer so wrong, they shalbe sped and not tarrie." The petitioners accordingly appear very much as in Heywood's "Play of the Weather," which most likely gave Lupton a number of hints.

A feeble and entirely unsuccessful attempt at recrudescence of the old serious spirit and broad scope of the morality manifests itself in the undated interlude of W. Wager, entitled: "The longer thou liuest the more foole thou art. A Myrrour very necessarie for youth, and specially for such as are like to come to dignitie and promotion." The plot follows the career of the fool, Moros, from the time when as a schoolboy he mocks and neglects the good Protestant admonition of his pedagogues, Discipline, Pity, and Exercitation, till he is smitten down in gray old age by God's Judgment, and carried off "to the Deuill" by Confusion. But so ambitious a scheme was quite disproportioned to the author's powers of execution. Not only does he fail — as any writer of his generation must in this species have inevitably failed — of reproducing the stern Miltonic dignity of "Everyman" and "The Castle of Perseverance." He shows himself unable to sustain even an artificial unity through the length of two thousand lines, and his large patchwork structure creaks and groans through every joint. The only readable fragments are a few frankly occasional and topical insertions, such as Moros's two interesting centos of odd lines from popular songs of the day, and People's quaint alphabetical list of the followers of Moros: —

"Syr Anthony Arrogant, Auditour,
Bartilmew brybor, Bayly:
Clement Catchpole, Cofferer,
Diuision, doublefaced dauie,
Edmund enuiouse, chiefe of the Eawery,
Fabian falshode, his head farmer,
Gregory gorbely, the goutie,
Gouerneth the grayne in the garner," etc.[1]

The time was now well past when a respectable drama could be produced by any writer who brought to his task only the heritage of mediæval convention. The life and spirit of the hour were everywhere abroad and pushed themselves inevitably into all imaginative works not engendered in an absolute intellectual vacuum. Two very late interludes "The Conflict of Conscience" and "The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality" are interesting as representing in different ways a forlorn hope at retention of the morality form in the face of new realistic influences which render it entirely ineffective.

The first of these plays was written by "Nathaniell Woodes, Minister, in Norwich" and printed in 1581 as "An excellent new Commedie ... Contayninge, A most lamentable example of the dolefull desperation of a miserable world-linge termed by the name of Philologus, who forsooke the trueth of Gods Gospel, for feare of the losse of lyfe & worldly goods." The eighteen parts are arranged for distribution among six players, "most conuenient for such as be disposed either to shew the Comedie in priuate houses, or otherwise." This drama — which the Prologue excuses as a trifle produced, for moral edification, when the author's

[1] Such fantastic alphabets were entirely conventional. Other instances occur in *Thersites* and R. B.'s *Appius and Virginia*.

mind was wearied "From reading grave and ancient works" — is plainly the creation of an amateur and a Protestant zealot. The piece is divided into six acts, presenting the career of a champion of religious reform, Philologus, who, denounced by Caconos, an ignorant northern priest, is brought to trial before an inquisitorial body composed of a Cardinal, Tyranny (*alias*, Zeal), Avarice, and Hypocrisy. Here he stoutly vindicates his belief, till won over by Sensual Suggestion and the enchanted mirror in which she shows him the pleasures of this world. Turning a deaf ear to the warnings of his good spirit and of Conscience, the recusant enjoys for a time, with his two sons, the fruits of his compliance with Rome, but he is soon visited by Horror and driven to the verge of suicide. In a long scene of twenty pages, strongly suggestive of that in which the scholars offer last comfort to Faustus, the despairing Philologus is reminded of the mercy of God by his friends Eusebius and Theologus; and the nuntius appears in a brief epilogue, dignified by the title of Act VI, to declare that the penitent has renounced all his errors, abhorred his blasphemies, and made a godly end.

The most remarkable thing about this awkward, but perfervid dramatic tract is that its ostensibly symbolic hero was an actual personality of the sixteenth century, — perhaps an Italian lawyer, Francis Spiera, who, after abjuring the tenets of Protestantism, committed suicide in remorse.[1] The Prologue reminds the

[1] The identification of Philologus with Spiera emanates from Collier, who is very disingenuous in his statement that "the apostasy of Francis Spira, or Spiera, is announced as the main subject" on the title-page. The title-page, on the contrary, merely refers to an unnamed "miserable world-linge."

audience that the argument of the play is "a history strange and true, to many men well known," though the author has thought it meet to omit actual names. Thus we have the spectacle of Mr. Woodes building sand walls against the tide, attempting in an excess of theological ardor to transmute actual history into moral abstraction just at the time when dramatic progress was everywhere replacing the abstract by the concrete. The play has an interest, therefore, as indicating the final refuge of allegorical drama among the same unprogressive class of religious homilists with whom it began.

"The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality" is the last gasp of the Tudor morality. Published in 1602, a specific reference to February 4 of the forty-third year of Queen Elizabeth, seems to point to that date (February 4, 1601, N. S.) as the time of the royal presentation advertised on the title-page.[1] As "The Conflict of Conscience" shows the allegorical drama revived by the archaic dilettantism of a preacher turned dramatist, the present play owes its partial adherence to the antiquated form to the confessed youthful inexperience of the writer,—probably a member of one of the inns of court or some similar play-giving institution. The plot treats the old theme of the vagaries of fortune, tracing the experiences of Money in the hands of the three rival claimants, Prodigality, Tenacity, and Liberality. However, there is no fixity of outline or purpose, and the piece is distressingly hard to read, because the author is continu-

[1] Professor Schelling (*Elizabethan Drama*, ii, 554) states that the play was written 1565 and revised in 1601. This may have been the case.

ally straying from one side to the other of the line which separates symbolism and actuality, obscuring his moral by little aimless sallies into the realm of picaresque realism. Neither as interlude nor as comedy of manners does the "Contention" merit serious consideration, but it possesses some good songs and serves to indicate how the well-cultivated taste for abstraction, languishing at this period from neglect, could a little later satisfy itself in the Jacobean masque.

Thus the survivals of the old interlude which kept themselves closest to the early Tudor form dragged out a somewhat varied existence during the reign of Elizabeth, and perished for want of an audience. In other instances, however, the interlude, by making concessions to the change in taste, was able to continue its hold upon popular favor and to exert a not inconsiderable influence upon the new drama. Before the Tudor period was half over, the more progressive writers of interludes began to feel impatience at the limited possibilities of their inherited material, and to look abroad for sources whence they might freshen the desiccated substance of the morality. Long before the death of Henry VIII, John Heywood had achieved an individual *tour de force* by his bold introduction of new elements from the narrative work of Chaucer and from contemporary French farce. Somewhat later, interludes commence to show close kinship with the Latin drama prevalent at the time in Germany and Holland, — very largely because of the new feeling of solidarity produced among the Protestant nations of the north by the Reformation conflict. The most important English plays of this nature are the anonymous "Nice

Wanton" (1560) and "The Disobedient Child" by Thomas Ingelend, both published after Elizabeth's accession, but first composed, as there is reason to believe, before the death of Edward VI in 1553. These works take up again the popular subject of perverted youth and treat it in conformity with the dramatic versions of the Prodigal Son story then fashionable in the Latin plays of the Continent.[1]

"Nice Wanton" [2] is one of the most successful essays in the interlude form. Its five hundred and fifty-two lines bring it well within the small compass which the contemporary conditions of presentation rendered desirable. Its author,[3] moreover, has been able to blend the serious didactic spirit and comprehensive outline of the best educational interludes, and the most effective of the old stock types, as presented in Iniquity, the Vice, and Worldly Shame, the Nemesis, with concrete scenes and figures of Dutch realism in a composite which far exceeds the individual capabilities of either species. The "Rebelles," a comedy of the Dutch Latinist Georgius Macropedius, first published in 1535, has been claimed as a source of "Nice Wanton," and

[1] An English version of *Acolastus*, the most famous of the Dutch-Latin plays on this theme, was executed by John Palsgrave, "Londoniensis," and published in 1540.

[2] The title of this play means, of course, not "la jolie pécheresse," as M. Jusserand translates it, but rather "the foolish spoiled child," "der alberne Zögling."

[3] The initials "T. R." printed at the end of the play in some modern texts give no hint concerning the authorship of the play. The letters belong to the vignette inserted at the end of King's edition. The same vignette, with the letters, appears also at the beginning of King's edition of *Impatient Poverty* and is evidently an inheritance from some earlier printer with the initials T. R.

some relationship, lineal or collateral, certainly appears to exist. However, a comparison of the two works brings out the essential differences more strongly than anything else, and emphasizes the real value of the elements which the English dramatist derived from the morality convention. The boisterous vigor of the songs and of the dialogue of the bad children, Ismael and Dalila, with their seducer, Iniquity; the broad sweep of the play, which in its brief compass — little over half that of the "Rebelles" — embraces the beginning and the end of life; most of all, the stern spirit which insists that the wages of sin be fully paid, refusing the comic termination of Macropedius, and requiring even of the vice, in return for his assumption of concrete human personality, that he expiate his offences like his confederate by hanging: all these qualities belong to "Nice Wanton," not by foreign importation, but by inheritance from the morality; and they indicate how much true force and promise the interlude still possessed when once turned into fresh and fruitful fields.

"The Disobedient Child" is a production of no such excellence as "Nice Wanton," but it shows how an English playwright about the middle of the sixteenth century could borrow a foreign plot and could considerably broaden its scope and effectiveness by the help of the matter which he found at home. This drama touches much more lightly than "Nice Wanton" the same theme of the just punishment which may befall ill-advised and self-indulgent youth. We have here pictured, not the criminal career and end of two wholly perverted children, but the folly of a pampered son, who, despising his father's exhortation to study, and the admonition to beware of women, soon finds

himself trapped into marriage with a shrew, and destitute of the means of livelihood.

The source from which Ingelend derived the rough framework of his play is a prose dialogue of the French Latinist, Ravisius Textor (Jean Tixier de Ravisi, 1480–1524); but Textor's scant two hundred and thirty-five lines of question and answer between a colorless Pater Juvenis and Uxor are expanded, in the fifteen hundred lines of the English work, into a drama of much higher intensity and literary merit than the original in any way suggested.[1] Fairly mellifluous speeches in alternate rime succeed the laconic clumsiness of mediæval prose latinity. Two songs are introduced in deference to native practice, of which the first at least possesses real beauty, and prologue and epilogue are added. The three main figures are depicted with a leisurely attention to concrete detail entirely foreign to Textor's method, and they are supplemented by five new comic characters in the man cook and woman cook, the priest, the prodigal's servant, and Satan himself, — the last brought upon the stage in frank reminiscence of the English mystery, to amuse the audience with his shout, —

> "Ho, ho, ho, what a fellow am I!
> Give room, I say, both more and less;"

and to moralize the immediately foregoing picture of marital discord. The five ineffective and ill-connected scenes of Textor are altered, multiplied, and in one

[1] There survives a single printed leaf out of an English interlude which appears to have followed the same dialogue of Textor with less freedom. This fragment, which antedates the publication of Ingelend's work, will be found reprinted in the *Malone Society* "Collections," I, i, 27–30 (1907).

case subdivided by Ingelend in a manner which conspicuously emphasizes the English poet's realization of the need for comic relief and dramatic probability. The classical allusions of the Latin text are, indeed, all retained by Ingelend with the scrupulous care natural in one who wished to have himself known "late student in Cambridge," but otherwise "The Disobedient Child" shows itself vividly English in tone, and original in every essential of treatment. Thus, this play illustrates, like the other members of its class, the two outstanding features of the mid-sixteenth-century interlude: the avidity, upon the one hand, with which it culled new plot-material, even in the most unpromising foreign fields; and, on the other hand, the great constant "Zugkraft" which caused it, automatically, as it were, to vitalize and domesticate all its borrowings.

The last example of the transitional interlude based on the Prodigal Son motif of the continental Latinists is George Gascoigne's "Glass of Government," first published in 1577. This play, in which I am unable to discern the merits pointed out by a recent biographer of Gascoigne,[1] seems to be much the poorest of all the extant essays in its kind; and it offers rather unnecessary proof of the inherent impossibility that English drama should derive any permanent guidance from a model so alien and inflexible as the academic Latin comedy of the German moralists. In the case of "Nice Wanton" and "The Disobedient Child" we see how English writers have struck out, in the heat of discovery of a new genre, dramas which owe such excellence as they possess to their native rather than imported characteristics. Gascoigne, however, who had

[1] See F. E. Schelling, *Publ. Univ. Penn.*, ii, 4 (1895), 47.

already qualified himself for a certain curious celebrity as the translator of a Latin-Italian comedy and a Greek Italian tragedy,[1] has attempted in "The Glass of Government" a mere pedestrian imitation of the then familiarly known work of the school of Macropedius.

Couched in undistinguished and tedious prose, this play follows the Terentian comic model in all matters of form, — in its neat division of act and scene, its restriction of the locality presented to Antwerp, and its supplanting of stage action by the reports of messengers, as well as in its use of rudely portrayed stock types: the pedant, the parasite, the harlot, the knavish servant (Ambidexter), and dissolute sons, and in its chorus of grave burghers. In the spirit of the piece Gascoigne imitates equally unimaginatively the chill Protestant morality of the Dutch Terentians. Nowhere does the play reflect any truth of English character or any situation from contemporary English life. The figures are all dull and unreal, and the plot, though outwardly regular in its development, is in effect perfectly futile because it presents on the stage nothing of real interest or importance, but leaves all the significant events in the career of the two pairs of good and bad children to be reported at second hand. Apart from all deficiencies of character drawing and theatrical manipulation, patent absurdity is involved in the structure of the play in that it makes the entire life story of the four young men — Phylautus, Philomusus, Phylosarchus, and Phylotimus — from their rudimentary education, through university experience and worldly business, to final reward or punishment synchronize with happenings in the city of Antwerp

[1] See pp. 164, 196.

which can only occupy a very few days or weeks. "The Glass of Government" closes an epoch. With "The Conflict of Conscience" it shares the distinction of being the last purely didactic moral play, and it is interesting that its publication fell upon the very year which brought to a head the opposition between Puritan morality and dramatic literature.[1] Essentially a reactionary and unreasoned production, it gives one leave to doubt whether any higher power than lucky accident had inspired Gascoigne, when, nine years before, he inaugurated a new era in English comedy by his translation of "The Supposes."

The first decade of Elizabeth's reign was a period of considerable theatrical activity, which began several innovations all-important for the great drama of twenty years later. One of the most eventful of these was the reaching out of the interlude into the domain of history. Conscious of the inadequacy of allegorical puppets to satisfy the growing demand for the presentation of real life, and yet unable to break away entirely from the traditionary models, the more ambitious writers of the period ventured upon a bold mingling of extremes. To offset the vagueness of symbolic figures, they mixed with them at random actual celebrities from the familiar fields of English history, Biblical story, or classic myth. The inevitable absurdity of this *mélange* was naturally fatal to the experimental works which inaugurated it, but the ultimate consequences were far-reaching and most salutary. In the course of a quarter century the alien elements had fused into a complex drama which joined to the morality's universality of appeal the concrete human application of his-

[1] Cf. p. 427 f.

toric fact, and the native English theatre rested upon a firm and permanent basis.

The first play to illustrate this important evolutionary tendency is probably Bale's "King John," which was perhaps written as early as the reign of Henry VIII, though certainly revised after the accession of Elizabeth. "King John" remained in manuscript till the nineteenth century, and it is uncertain whether it was ever acted in London.[1] It can, therefore, hardly have exerted much direct influence upon English dramatic development. Yet as an indication of general tendencies it is of the utmost interest, since it shows the interlude enriched by both of the two new elements which we have been discussing; the imitation of continental Latin drama and the insertion of well-known historic figures. The years of Bale's first exile (1540–1547) had been spent very largely in Lutheran Germany, where he found congenial company and established relations which were of some importance for his later dramatic writings. More than to any one else Bale owes to the Protestant dramatist, Thomas Kirchmayer, author of a Latin satire on the papal institution called "Pammachius" (1538), which Bale translated into English, and which was performed at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1545.[2]

From "Pammachius" Bale probably derived the first suggestion for "King John," as well as the general satiric method of the play, which is considerably dif-

[1] See, however, the interesting document printed by Collier (*Eng. Dram. Poetry*, ed. 1879, i, 123–125), which shows that "an enterlude concernyng King John" was performed "at my Lorde of Canterbury's," Jan. 2, 1539.

[2] See C. H. Herford, *Literary Relations*, 129 f.

ferent from that of his earlier works; and the idea of presenting the Pope himself on the stage as the leader of the powers of evil. Because of the introduction, on the other hand, of such actual figures as King John, Cardinal Pandulphus, Stephen Langton, and Raymond of Toulouse, the drama has been sometimes noted as the earliest English history play; but such a classification is rather superficial. The real affiliation of "King John" is rather with controversial moralities of the type of "Magnificence" and "Respublica" than with the later "history." It was written with the author's eye continually upon existing conditions in religion and politics, and King John himself is as essentially unhistoric, as far from representing an actual personage of a bygone age, as is the "Widow England" from really typifying the nation in the thirteenth century. Langton, Pandulphus, and Raymundus are mere aliases temporarily assumed by the vices of Sedition, Private Wealth, and Dissimulation. Thus the first introduction of the concrete into the province of allegory makes clear the strength of the hold which the morality convention still retained upon dramatic procedure. Capable not only of maintaining itself, but even of generalizing the new specific importations, the symbolic tradition could not be totally supplanted, but was very gradually amalgamated with the newer influences.

The plays of "Godly Queen Hester" and "King Darius" show English playwrights searching again in Holy Scripture, like their fourteenth-century predecessors, for dramatic subjects, but it is romantic interest now and not moral truth which they seek. "Queen Hester," which the title-page of the only extant edition reports to have been "newly made and imprinted this

present yere, 1561," relates in fairly regular manner the story of the advancement of Haman by Ahasuerus, the marriage of Esther to the King, the insolence of Haman and his plot against the Jews, with their rescue by Esther and the overthrow of Haman. Pride, Adulation, and Ambition are introduced to expose the faults of Haman, and the vice, Hardydardy, secures the post of fool in the household of the same unscrupulous favorite. It is impossible to resist the suspicion of personal satire in the delineation of Haman. The analogy between his character and Wolsey's in his rapid advancement, his arrogance, and his impoverishment of the realm — so that, as Ambition remarks, "if war should chance, either with Scotland or France, this gear would not go right" — has impelled several critics to regard the play as a companion piece to "Magnificence," produced by a member of Skelton's party before the Cardinal's death in 1530.[1] Against this view weighs — though perhaps with no absolutely decisive force — the repeated assertion of the title-page that the work was "A newe enterlude — newly made" in 1561, and the certainty that it finds a more natural place among the interludes of the period 1550–1560 than among those of Henry VIII's early reign.

"King Darius" is specifically described on the title-page as "A Pretie new Enterlude both pithie and pleasant — taken out of the third and forth Chapter of the third booke of Esdras." The date of the extant edition is 1565. The title and the statement of source are both rather deceptive, for only four hundred and fifty lines out of sixteen hundred have any connection with Darius or his court. The rest of the play is definitely

[1] See p. 82 ff.

localized in England and forms a perfectly independent moral interlude of anti-papal tendency. The two sets of scenes and the characters belonging to each are entirely distinct. There could not be less trace of assimilation, indeed, had the poet written the Darius scenes separately, and inserted them arbitrarily as a further ornament between the natural divisions of his otherwise complete morality. There is no evidence that this was not the case. In "Jacob and Esau," an admirable Scriptural drama of the same period (licensed 1557–1558), containing no features peculiar to the interlude, and in A. Golding's frank translation of "A Tragedie of Abrahams Sacrifice. Written in French by Theodore Beza" (composed 1575), one finds further illustration of the way in which native and foreign dramatic tendencies were at this time running separate courses, sometimes strictly parallel and distinct, sometimes exerting mutual influence, but not yet mingled in a single current.

There is good evidence that playwrights, even as early as the close of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, were beginning to look for plot material, not only in the more orthodox repositories of historical and Biblical narrative, but even sometimes in the literature of romance. The bare suggestion of a romantic strain in the interlude of "Saint John the Evangelist" has been already pointed out.[1] The first clear instance of the same tendency is found in the play generally known as "Calisto and Melibea," of which the source is the earlier portion of the Spanish novel-drama, "Celestina." It would appear that the author, or the publisher, John Rastell, was in this case uneasily conscious

[1] See p. 105.

of the unconventionally frivolous nature of the theme, for on the title-page he entirely suppresses the names of the notorious lovers, and introduces the work to the reader in the following non-committal and enigmatic language: "A new comedye in englysh in maner of an enterlude ryght elygant & full of craft of rethoryk, wherein is shewd & dyscrybyd as well the bewte & good propertes of women as theyr vycys & euyll cõdiciõs with a morall cõclusion & exhortacyon to vertew." Agreeably with the promise thus implied, the conclusion of the play is utterly distorted in the interest of moral effect. The absence, however, among the *dramatis personæ* of any allegorical figure and the entire absorption of attention in the progress of a secular love intrigue distinguish the play clearly from other interludes of the time, and give it a claim to rank with the structurally far better comedies of Heywood among the richest of all the plays of Henry VIII's reign in promise for the future drama.

The output of the English press during the first half-century of its existence is known in considerable degree from mere fragmentary odds and ends. No dramatic loss thus involved, however, is perhaps more to be deplored than that of the interlude dealing with the love of Publius Cornelius and the Lady Lucrece, of which only two leaves are now extant, though there seems reason to hope that the rest of the work is not irrecoverably lost.[1] The surviving fragment has been ascribed to the press of John Rastell, and may thus have been associated in origin as well as in the nature of its theme with "Calisto and Melibea."

[1] The extant portion is reprinted in *Malone Society* "Collections," I, ii (1908), 137–142.

A much more advanced work than any of the preceding is John Phillip's "Comedy of Meek and Patient Grissell," in which the trials of Boccaccio's heroine are presented, not altogether unsympathetically, by means of the crude allegorical devices of the moralities. This play can be most satisfactorily studied in connection with the contemporary interludes founded on classic story.

The earliest example of the introduction of classical figures into the English interlude can be very precisely dated. It occurs in the farce of "Thersites," which the fact of partial translation from a Latin dialogue of Ravisius Textor would naturally set later than the publication of the earliest edition of Textor's poem in 1530, while allusions in the Epilogue to the English play to the birth of Edward VI and the illness of Queen Jane Seymour point clearly to the middle of October (Oct. 12–24), 1537. "Thersites" is an utterly absurd performance in the roughest of doggerel rime, but its author is proved a fair scholar by his occasional variations and expansions of Textor's mythological references, while his large original infusions of local raillery and buffoonery witness a vigorous natural gift in the less polished forms of farcical merriment. As in the parallel case of "The Disobedient Child," the two hundred and fifty lines of Textor's dialogue, written this time in hexameter verse, serve only as a point of departure for the English writer, who quadruples the poem's length; adds — in bad taste, it must be confessed — the whole concluding episode of Telemachus; and uses the elements of Textor's drama (Thersites's colloquies with Vulcan and his mother, his combats with the "testudo" and Miles) as occasions for infinite

jest of local and contemporary application. Thersites drops entirely his Homeric character, ogles his audience between scenes like the native vice in "Like Will to Like," and pours out indecorous nothings to the confusion of individual spectators.

Quite as English in tone as "The Disobedient Child," this play shows none of Ingelend's originality in plot construction or character delineation, but remains in respect of these essentials on the same plane of uncouth naïveté with Textor's dialogue, and thus affiliates itself with a much less advanced species of interlude than that with which this chapter has been mainly concerned. Everything seems to indicate that "Thersites" was designed for presentation before a vulgar audience. Instead of the indoor stage on which scene follows scene in orderly progression, we have here to do with the old mediæval arrangement of "platea" and individual "sedes." The second stage direction tells us: "Mulciber must have a shop made in the place [*i. e.*, 'platea'], and Thersites cometh before it, saying aloud." This representation of a shop stood apparently on one side of the stage through the entire play, and Mulciber four times comes out at Thersites's call and reënters to execute his commissions. Another fixed seat was occupied by Thersites's mother. The stage direction announces: "Then the mother goeth in the place which is prepared for her," and it is in this place, somewhere on the edge of the stage and in view of the spectators, that Thersites seeks refuge from Miles: "Thersites must run away, and hide him behind his mother's back."

The stage on which "Thersites" was presented thus bears more analogy to that used for "The Castle of

Perseverance" than to the curtained platform ordinarily employed for courtly interludes; and other indications likewise suggest popular performance. The entire lack of moral import, greater than in even the most unabashed of Heywood's interludes, is combined with several clear concessions to bourgeois taste. The mythological allusions of the Latin original, far from distasteful to any educated renaissance audience, are in part supplanted by references to the vernacular literature of the humbler classes. Thus, Textor's lines, —

> "Si montes quibus Enceladus fraterque Ryphaeus
> Tentavere Jovem superis detrudere regnis,
> Impeterent, caderetque in te scapulosus Olympus,
> Pondere sub nullo rigida haec lorica fatiscat," —

are familiarized as follows: —

> "If Malvern Hills should on thy shoulders light,
> They shall not hurt them, nor suppress thy might.
> If Bevis of Hampton, Colburn, and Guy,
> Will thee assay, set not by them a fly!
> To be brief, this habergin shall thee save."

And in the subsequent pages the names of Textor's classical celebrities are often fairly pushed out of the lines to make room for the mention of heroes of another cult, beloved by the common people, but regarded by the polished classes of the day with unaffected scorn, — heroes like "King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table," "Gawain the courteous and Kay the crabbed," Sir Isenbras, Robin Hood, Little John, and Friar Tuck. The rollicking absurdity of the nonsense verse near the end of the play, ringing the changes on the names of places situated for the most part about the upper Thames valley, would hardly have been tolerated by

an educated London audience.[1] So, the general character of the final address to the spectators, bidding them be obedient to their "rulers and parents," and possibly a note of uncertainty concerning the progress of affairs at court, suggest that this play, the first to embody the connection with ancient literature which was to become peculiarly a feature of fashionable drama, was written for a rather unfashionable public and performed probably by schoolboys.

"Thersites" seems to have been a random manifestation, occasioned by the example of Textor and devoid of bearing upon contemporary dramatic practice. A quarter of a century elapsed before the transitional interlude began seriously to import themes and figures from classic story; and then the plays of this type — Pikering's "Horestes," Preston's "Cambises," Edwards's "Damon and Pithias," and R. B.'s "Appius and Virginia" — all produced during the first ten or fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign, coincided entirely in their method, structure, and their circle of appeal with the Biblical interludes of the same date. It happened that the appearance in the four interludes just named of *dramatis personæ* from classical history or fiction occurred simultaneously with the attempt to introduce pure classical models in tragedy and comedy; and superficially it seems hard to distinguish between interludes which treat Greek or Latin subjects and classical imitations which retain certain features of

[1] The places mentioned, apart from Antwerp and Tunis, are: Cumnor, Tewkesbury, Sudeley, Comerton (? Combe-Martin), Bromwicham (? Birmingham), Buckingham, Baldockbury, Tavistock, Oxford, Hinksey, Thrutton, Chertsey, Cotswold, Malvern, and London.

the interlude. The plays of the former type will therefore deserve slight further notice when we come in the next chapters to trace the spread of classical influence. Yet, intrinsically and historically, the differences which separate works like "Cambises" from the contemporary "Gorboduc" are of the greatest importance. In comparison with the out-and-out provincialism of "Thersites," plays of the "Cambises" type appear rather aristocratic in tone, and they were probably all intended in the first instance for performance on the private stage normal in interlude presentation. But with the extension among the educated public of the rigid demand for that precise classic regularity of form which "Gorboduc" illustrates, plays of mixed character like "Cambises" were forced more and more to make their appeal to popular and unlettered audiences; and in that atmosphere they tended to accentuate their comic and spectacular features. Thus it resulted that the interlude, which had begun its active existence as the dramatic medium of the most refined and progressive opinion, finally died out in these changed and degraded survivals as a cheap and shoddy vulgar substitute for the regular Latin tragedy to which the polite world had for the time turned its interest.

John Pikering's "Newe Enterlude of Vice, Conteyninge the History of Horestes" (1567) stands probably at the highest point attained by the transitional interlude in the development of dramatic unity and tragic purpose. In this play, to be sure, as in "King Darius," there is a juxtaposition of serious classic story and native comedy, but here it is the former constituent, the representation of Orestes's vengeance upon his mother,

that takes up the greater part of the drama. The humorous matter is subordinate. Furthermore, although the two strains are not completely fused, they are not distinct as in "King Darius." The vice, who goes by many names, is one of the principal agents in the conduct of the tragic plot. As Courage, he exhorts Orestes to undertake the war, and as Revenge, his rightful title, he stands at the avenger's elbow, and later points the moral of the piece. In this play and in its less regular companions, "Cambises" and "Appius and Virginia," the interlude stands as close to tragedy as even indirect foreign stimulus could probably ever bring it. The next twenty years saw in England the complete dissolution of the hereditary dramatic form and the reincarnation of the dramatic spirit.

But as the reader turns from the conscientious study of all the diverse manifestations of the early native mystery, morality, and interlude to the more familiar products of developed Elizabethan comedy or tragedy, he must be impressed by the multiplicity of the connecting threads of influence. The restricted dramatic current, which we can follow for over two centuries in its divagations through a rather arid tract of literature, passed out into the broad expanse of the Elizabethan world drama by more mouths than can easily be counted.

The blending of morality convention with the renaissance cult of pagan mythology shows itself in "The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune" (1589) and in the very dull and absurd play of a well-known actor, "The Cobbler's Prophecy," by Robert Wilson (1594). "The Three Ladies of London" (1584) and "Three

A TUDOR INTERLUDE (?) IN PROGRESS : LOOKING TOWARD THE AUDIENCE

From the title-page to R. W.'s "Three Lords and Three Ladies of London," 1590

Lords and Three Ladies of London" (1590), written probably by the same Robert Wilson and bearing his initials on their title-pages, show the interlude in the last phase of its drift toward city comedy. The two plays just mentioned, though intrinsically among the dullest of the interludes, possess a claim to notice by reason of the obvious seriousness of their literary pretensions. Like such earlier works as "The Tide Tarrieth No Man" and "All for Money," they present a sincere criticism of existing conditions by means of literal dozens of figures and almost interminable lines of careful verse. The sensitiveness to changes of literary fashion, indicated in the transition from the long rambling couplets of "The Three Ladies" to the blank verse of "The Three Lords and Three Ladies," has been often noted. What is perhaps less frequently felt is the intimacy with which these apparently lifeless pieces represent the prevailing social interests of their day. In their scourging of the current iniquities of usury and simony, and in the timely ridicule of Spanish arrogance presented in the later play, they broach several of the most vital issues in the life of the age.[1]

A much more human and readable play, even more complex in its affiliations, is the "Merry Knack to Know a Knave" (1594). Here the moral abstraction Honesty plays a prominent rôle at the court of the Saxon King Edgar, circumventing and overthrowing each of the Bailiff of Hexham's rascally sons: Courtier, Priest, Coneycatcher, and Farmer. This medley of interlude, mythical history, and comedy of manners is further confused by the interpolation of a charming

[1] Tom Beggar in the earlier play may be the original of Autolycus.

romantic sub-plot dealing with the rivalry of King Edgar and his confidant Ethanwold for the hand of the Lady Alfrida.

Even when the English drama was well entered upon its ultimate catholic career in the work of Shakespeare and his greatest contemporaries, concrete evidences of the force of the older fashion still persisted. Characteristic devices of the morality type repeat themselves in Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," in Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay;" in the general structure of Nash's only independent play, "Summer's Last Will and Testament," and the general subject of Peele's "David and Bethsabe" and Lodge and Greene's "Looking Glass for London;" most notably of all in the continued vivid allusions to Vice and Iniquity in the works of Shakespeare.

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CHAPTER V

CLASSICAL INFLUENCE IN COMEDY

When the germs of an English national drama first developed into conscious life amid the moribund survivals of the conventional mystery and morality, the new element was still quite simple. The range of this incipient comedy was, indeed, little broader than that of the performances of the itinerant *mimi* and *joculatores* against whom the fulminations of the Church had been directed in centuries past.[1] The authors of the secular interpolations from which the true English drama may be said to spring addressed themselves, like the wandering joculatores or jongleurs, to vulgar audiences, and they treated vulgar themes. The second Shepherds' Play in the Towneley cycle, containing the story of Mak; the different versions of the quarrel between Noah and his wife; the crude horse-play of the less serious moralities, wherein the vice belabors his victims, or is himself beaten, — these episodes represent the most vital work which the English drama at the commencement of the Renaissance had to offer. Comedy at this period can scarcely be said to possess intellectual interest. Its appeal was almost wholly physical. The writers depended for the amusement of their audiences upon the farcical presentation of ruffianism and the contortions of bodily pain.

The changes which we have traced through the transitional middle years of the Tudor period are of

[1] Cf. Chambers, *Mediæval Stage*, i, 31 ff ; ii, Appendix N.

great importance as evidences of a striving after broader art, but they produced few absolute results. The general upheaval in letters and religion altered somewhat the tone of comedy, but was not able to effect any radical reform in structure. It brought in a taste for serious themes and introduced experimentally certain foreign models, but the drama remained dependent still for its bone and sinew upon native pre-renaissance convention.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, English drama as represented in comedy by Heywood's interludes and in more serious styles by "Respublica," "King Darius," and "Nice Wanton," had developed as far as it could naturally proceed without external assistance in the way of structural rules and models. There was but one source whence such rules might come; namely, the comedy and tragedy of ancient Rome. Greek drama was at the time much too little known to exert influence upon the popular or even in any appreciable measure upon the purely academic theatre.

The influence of Latin drama manifested itself during the Elizabethan age under several conditions. It might come direct; that is, authors might base their work immediately upon the comedies of Plautus and Terence, or the tragedies of Seneca. It was thus that the first Latinizing plays in England were produced. Beside this frank imitation, however, which, till the art of literary amalgamation could gradually perfect itself, was inevitably betrayed by the clash of ancient and modern conceptions, there filtered in a subtler strain of influence by way of the classic drama of Italy, where Latin plot and precept had already been largely shifted into accord with current interests and views of life, and

lent themselves, therefore, to considerably easier absorption. An illustration, probably not very unfair, of the difference in effect between classical influence when exerted immediately and when transmitted at second-hand by way of Italy, may be obtained by contrasting Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors," based directly on the "Menæchmi" of Plautus and somewhat marred by stiffness, with the graceful intrigue comedy in the sub-plot of "The Taming of the Shrew," where the Latin influence reaches the same poet through the medium of Ariosto's "Suppositi."

The first, fundamental gift of Latin drama to English was the example of the division of plays into acts and scenes, a practice introduced by the scholarly Bale and universalized with the spread of classic imitation. Inherently, no doubt, this seems a matter of small consequence. Yet no student of the floundering transitional interludes or the vast amount of equally floundering work which succeeded them can fail to recognize in it precisely the kind of check indispensable at this period to the excessive Elizabethan exuberance and uncertainty. The habit of building plays upon a rigid five-act pattern which required careful planning beforehand, and put a very strong if not invariably effectual curb on the chronic impulse to addition and divagation, was just the force that turned dramatic production into a regular channel where it might progress smoothly and consecutively. Lacking this mould of form, the drama of the age might easily have proved as devoid of restraint and conscious purpose as was, for instance, the Elizabethan epic.

Another borrowing from general classic technique, likewise introduced by Bale, was of very considerable

consequence, though by no means so rapidly or thoroughly assimilated as the principle of act division. This was the recognition of a definite line of cleavage between comedy and tragedy. The vagueness with which the early Elizabethan dramatists, and many even of the later ones, distinguish between the uses and purposes of the two types is sufficiently well known. It was the natural result of the complete absorption of tragedy in comedy which characterized the later morality; and the less responsible playwrights remained satisfied till nearly the end of our period with heterogeneous medleys which they might at will term comical tragedies or tragical comedies. All the features in this contamination which made for realism and legitimate variety persisted, and they contributed largely to the vitality of the dramatic product. But the study of ancient models confirmed in each of the progressive writers the realization, prerequisite to serious theatrical criticism and practice, that essentially comedy is one thing and tragedy another. The complete acquisition of this necessary lesson is probably best witnessed in the mature procedure of Shakespeare and the well-weighed theory of Ben Jonson. But through the whole evolution of dramatic method, from the groping indecision of Sackville, Edwards, and Udall to the conscious mastery of the last great Elizabethans, the fundamental conception of the peculiar nature of comedy and of tragedy is, like the terms themselves, an undisputed heritage from the Latin stage.

The introduction of classical models broadened the range of the drama as much as it developed dramatic art. From Plautus and Terence the English comic writers learned to refine their native buffoonery by the

cultivation of a more intellectual species of wit, enriching the clownage of plebeian life by the addition of those laughable characters and incidents which arise amid more complex societies. Civic types came more and more to replace the old ethical abstractions and unlocalized Merry Andrews. Yet the generalizing tendency of the interlude remained happily strong enough to offset the contracted scope and inherent superficiality of city comedy, as it flourished in ancient Rome and later on the English Restoration stage. So well, indeed, did the native and classical elements blend that few Elizabethan comedies are notably lacking, either in broad human application or in realistic discrimination of the social types. On the one hand, we see the old native clown individualized and intellectualized in Falstaff; on the other, we find the soulless *miles gloriosus* humanized in Bobadill.[1]

Small as are the merits of the Roman comedians in point of invention and originality, their influence broadened very notably the narrow scope of the interlude. From Terence and Plautus Elizabethan dramatists obtained several new types of plot which for them possessed a freshness long vanished from the few hackneyed morality themes, and not really acquired by any of the experiments of the transitional interlude. Several of the richest veins of Tudor comedy were struck in the direct line of classic imitation, and the less patent results of the same classicizing tendency were even more intrinsically important. The assimilation of Latin plot material, by doubling at a leap the structural resources of the English dramatist, made possible endless permutations and combinations, and stimulated the development of many new sorts of intrigue

which would otherwise have remained unsought and unsuspected. In tracing, therefore, the influence of Latin comedy, the critic can ill afford to limit his consideration to such obvious derivatives as "The Comedy of Errors" and "The Alchemist." He must heed also the more delicate affinities which show the example of Plautus-Terence to have been a necessary preparation even for the romantic plays of "The Merchant of Venice" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

And though, during the culminating period of dramatic progress, the years of Shakespeare's prime, the self-proclaimed classical spirit in Jonsonian comedy stands for restraint and self-containment as against the genial but ungoverned diffusiveness of the more popular school, it must be remembered that both in comedy and in tragedy the sterner lessons of classic reserve were learned rather from Latin prose and verse theorists than from the actual procedure of the Roman dramatists. Indeed, it is even true that these dramatists themselves contributed to that exuberant taste for vivid, if irrelevant, excitement and ornament which "romantic" plays like "As You Like It" and "The Winter's Tale" rendered orthodox, and "classic" plays like "Every Man in his Humour" attempted vainly to supplant. The opposition is less justly ascribed to a conflict of native artlessness with ancient rule than to that of two mutually supplementary attitudes toward art which coexisted in Roman times just as they did in Elizabethan, and which the connotation of solidarity involved in the ordinary use of the word "classic" altogether obscures. In fact, there is little in the comedies of Plautus and Terence or the tragedies of Seneca

which can properly be called classic in the Jonsonian sense; and we shall see that far the most certain and permanent results of the influence of these writers upon early English drama were, in comedy, the cultivation of a species of intrigue much more elaborate and improbable than had before been known, and, in tragedy, the birth of melodrama.

The motif of mistaken identity, which the Latin comic dramatists had so over-used, is put to equally hard though more varied service on the Elizabethan stage. In Lyly's "Mother Bombie," in "The Supposes," "The Comedy of Errors," and a dozen other plays of the late sixteenth century, it furnishes the backbone of the plot. Moreover, it was undoubtedly the force of classic precedent rather than the spiritless mumming of the interludes which gave rise to the extraordinary Elizabethan love of stage disguise and masquerade and continued it to the end of the Jacobean period. The intricacy of the Latin fable, resting usually upon a tissue of mutual deceit and misunderstanding, appears to have had a peculiar zest for the English comic writers after the long vain efforts of the interlude to escape from the threadbare simplicity of the morality plots. It is to be regarded as a testimony to the strength of Terentian example that, after about 1575, Elizabethan comedy tends normally toward excessive convolution of structure, in the most marked contrast to the extreme tenuity of the traditionary native model. This love of a tangled skein of incident and character, even to the detriment of dramatic effectiveness, can be followed from Lyly's plays through many of Shakespeare's, and perhaps reaches its climax in the dizzying maze of deception, misunderstanding, and cross purpose which

bewilder the reader of "Wily Beguiled" and Chapman's "All Fools."

Of the great popularity of the Latin comedies during the sixteenth century many evidences survive, though it was not till about the middle of the century that they began obviously to influence the vernacular English drama. Terence had, indeed, retained his hold upon the reading public throughout the dark ages, and had inspired directly a number of imitative dramas such as those of the German nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim in the tenth century, and the productions of the great German-Latin school in the late fifteenth and sixteenth. The work of this last group, largely because of its religious and political bias, was considerably more immediate in its effect on English drama than was its Latin source, and it has been alluded to already in the connection in which it properly belongs as a variant influence in the development of the later interlude.

The discovery of the twelve lost comedies of Plautus, in 1427, raised the fame of that dramatist to a full equality throughout learned Europe with the traditional repute of Terence, and the subsequent influence of the two poets upon English dramatic evolution is virtually identical. The plays of each were read constantly during the entire sixteenth century in schools and colleges; and in the Latin original they were not infrequently acted, sometimes as academic exercises very much in the manner still continued in the annual performances at Westminster School, at other times with less definitely educational intent.

Several interesting allusions prove the early vogue of Plautus with the courtly English public before which the interludes were ordinarily presented, — the public,

that is, whose taste was during the early Tudor period the determining factor in the evolution of dramatic types. Thus Holinshed's Chronicle bears witness to this juxtaposition of a play of Plautus, presumably acted in the original, with one of the disguisings so popular in connection with interludes. The occasion was a state entertainment of Henry VIII, in the great hall at Greenwich, May 7, 1520: "Into this chamber came the king, and the queene, with the hostages, and there was a goodlie comedie of Plautus plaied; and that doone, there entered into the chamber eight ladies in blacke veluet bordered about with gold . . . & tired like the Aegyptians verie richlie." (Holinshed, ed. 1808, iii, 635, 636.)

A passage in Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" (1516) is significant both for its picturing of the circumstances of Plautine theatrical presentation, and because of its plea for the absolute discrimination of comedy from tragedy: "Or els, whyles a commodye of Plautus is playinge, and the vyle bondemen skoffynge and tryfelynge amonge themselfes, yf yowe shoulde sodenlye come vpon the stage in a philosophers apparrell, and reherse owte of 'Octauia' the place wherin Seneca dysputeth with Nero; had it not bene better for yowe to haue played the domme persone, then by rehersynge that, which serued nother for the tyme nor place, to haue made suche a tragycall comedye or gallymalfreye? For by bryngynge in other stuffe that nothynge apperteyneth to the presente matter, yowe must nedys marre and peruert the play that ys in hande, thoughe the stuffe that yowe brynge be muche better." [1]

[1] *Utopia*, Robynson's translation, ed. J. H. Lupton, Oxford, 1895, 98 f.

Certainly Plautus receives here very left-handed praise; and it must be admitted that the constant predilection of Elizabethan drama in favor of "bryngynge in other stuffe that nothynge apperteyneth to the presente matter," together with the traditions of More's own participation in such amateur gallimaufreys lends point to the suspicion that his allusions to Plautus and Seneca are rather due to the desire of a neat classical illustration, than the result of observation of actual performances.

No English translation of Plautus is known previous to the version of the "Menæchmi" by W. W. in 1595; but a rendering of the "Andria" of Terence had appeared as early as 1497, and it was reprinted at least three times before the end of the year 1588 (1510, 1520? 1588), while a very special personal interest attaches to an anthology representing parts of three Terentian comedies: "Floures for Latine speakyng . . . selected and gathered oute of Terence, and the same translated into englyshe . . . compiled by Nicolas Udall."

The most elementary and not improbably the earliest experiment at introducing upon the native stage the much-admired devices of Roman comedy appears in the undated "new Enterlued for Chyldren to playe named Iacke Iugeler," which was licensed for publication during the year beginning July 22, 1562, but was probably extant in manuscript at least a decade before. The author of this piece feels himself to be an innovator, and he states his objects frankly in a prologue: —

> "In this manner of making [*i. e.*, in comedy] Plautus did excel
> . . . . . .
> Wherefore this maker delighteth passingly well
> To follow his arguments, and draw out the same."

And he admits with a candor which might well be imitated by more homiletic comedians the purely ludicrous intention of the play, —

> "not worth an oyster shell,
> Except percase it shall fortune to make you laugh well."

The story of this farce, which does not extend beyond the length of a single act, is derived avowedly from the first scene of the "Amphitruo," but all the details of characterization and setting are as typically English as anything in the native drama. This early excursion into the foreign field illustrates well what is throughout the salient and determining feature in the progress of Tudor drama, — the essential predominance in all plays which truly represent popular interest of the domestic, national spirit over the alien influences, however numerous and freely introduced. It is only, indeed, when the student comes to weigh carefully the results of the exotic importations of the mid-century that he is likely to comprehend fully the strong and permanent hold which the mystery and morality species had acquired upon the whole English drama. It is an indubitable truth that the Elizabethan stage could not have evolved the self-conscious and varied art form which it produced without tutelage from Latin technique and the assimilation of much new material. But it is a truth yet more remarkable that none of the forces from abroad, Latin, Italian, French, German, or Spanish, was able in the case of any normal Elizabethan play to supplant or seriously diminish the native tone of the character portrayal and atmosphere, till the Jacobean decline had well set in. The author of "Jack Juggler" has accomplished, apparently unconsciously and inevitably, that complete translation of

his remote theme into terms of contemporary life and interest, which for a modern playwright would be the hardest of all tasks. The Sosia of Plautus is reincarnated in the page, Jenkin Careaway, as vivid a local type as the most sternly national art could produce, while the same blind force of natural selection replaces Mercury by the mischievous gamin, Jack Juggler. The other figures — Master Bongrace and his wife, Dame Coy, and the maid, Alison Trip-and-go — can hardly be said to owe even the first suggestion to Plautus's Amphitryon, Alcmene, or Bromia.[1] The real English family setting, once outlined, develops itself in this sketch, as in "Ralph Roister Doister," "Gammer Gurton's Needle," and many another superficially classicizing play, — not from any special realistic talent or intention on the author's part, but by reason of the close intertwining of drama and native life, which was the supreme heritage prepared by the mystery, the morality, and the interlude for the Elizabethan theatre.

"Ralph Roister Doister" is probably the most enlightening illustration extant of the influence of Latin precedent upon English comic practice. The date of this piece remains in doubt, conjectures ranging over the period between 1534 and 1552, though the weight of probability seems still to incline toward the conventional ascription of the work to the years of Udall's mastership at Eton school (1534–1541). It is hardly an accident that the author of this "first regular English comedy" should be a writer whom we know from other

[1] This play has been explained as a travesty of the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation. See F. S. Boas in *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. v, 120.

evidences to have been most actively interested both in the classical and in the native English theatre. In 1533 he was concerned in a pageant performed at Anne Boleyn's coronation; in the following year he published his Terentian translations. In 1554, a letter of Queen Mary, dated Dec. 3, praises his past diligence "in setting foorth of Dialogues and Enterludes before us for our regell disports and recreacion," and calls upon the Master of the Revels to give him free use of royal property for such performances as he "myndeth hereafter to shewe." [1]

"Roister Doister" is probably, after "The Comedy of Errors," the most careful imitation of Plautine drama produced during the sixteenth century in the English vernacular; but it cannot be regarded, like Shakespeare's youthful farce, as in any serious degree an adaptation of a particular Roman play. Udall's knowledge of classic theory and practice, immensely broader and better-digested, of course, than that of the young Shakespeare, is everywhere corrected by his equally intimate acquaintance with native types and theatrical requirements. The professional supervisor of interludes to Queen Mary's court stood in no danger, schoolmaster though he was, of producing a closet drama, or satisfying himself with a mere antiquarian revival. The reader feels himself everywhere in the world pictured by the ancient comic dramatists, — this is, indeed, the most remarkable quality in the work, — and he is reminded by incidents and figures now of the "Miles Gloriosus," now of other plays; but these analogies will not bear pressing. The slightest comparison shows that Roister Doister differs radically from

[1] See *Loseley MSS.*, ed. A. J. Kempe, 1836.

Pyrgopolinices, both in his character and in his adventures; while Merrygreek, though inevitably suggestive of the Latin parasite, has little actual affinity to any representative of the type. With the other characters the reminiscence of specific classic models almost entirely disappears, though the general flavor of classic "atmosphere" does not. Udall has not attempted in "Roister Doister" to imitate any special Roman comedy, — not even in the free way in which Shakespeare imitates the "Menæchmi," or the author of "The Birth of Hercules" the "Amphitruo."[1] Rather, he has evolved an entirely independent English comedy in classic style. He has adopted consistently the ancient rules of act and scene division, and he has tried throughout to build up his play in harmony with the classical and scholarly conception of the nature of comedy, seeking amusement rather in the display of clever urbane wit and the baiting of fools and dupes than in farcical accident or rustic clownage. But in the working out of this design, Udall shows nearly as much of the practical playwright as of the theoretical innovator. His classical type-figures — the vain-glorious fool, the self-seeking busy-body, the desirable widow — absorbed from the native conventions of the interlude and from the ordinary life of the day qualities which differentiate them wholly from the characters of Plautus.

As the dramatic crises approach, moreover, the poet yields to the savage native demand for a ruder species of excitement than mere words and irony can produce. Ignoring classic proprieties, he subjects his braggart Roister to the same rough handling which the braggart

[1] See the very valuable edition of *The Birth of Hercules* (MS. *ca.* 1610) prepared by M. W. Wallace, 1903.

Watkyn of the Digby play[1] had received, and which formed the main comic resort of many an interlude. For an illustration of the difference between the real classic drama, even in its Plautine crudity, and Udall's fortunately semi-barbarized adaptation, one has only to compare the humiliation of Pyrgopolinices ("Miles Gloriosus," V, i) with that of Roister. Much injury may be done to historical perspective by emphasizing the indubitable classic tone of "Ralph Roister Doister" to the entire disregard of the play's legitimate connection with earlier English drama. Udall was, in respect of one side of his varied genius, a direct continuator of the work of Heywood; and it is the special distinction of his play, not simply that it embodies the careful art form and intellectual intrigue of Latin comedy, but that it establishes them as necessary constituents of the most advanced and characteristic native drama. Several of the English types represented first in this comedy play prominent parts on the later stage, one of the most vivid being the toothless old nurse, Marjorie Mumblecrust, much given to chattering and quarrelling, who will not stick for a kiss with such a gay gentleman as Roister Doister, but comes anon at the first offer of the salutation. Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" and Marlowe's "Dido" add few new touches to this figure.

A very interesting contrast is afforded by the comparison of "Roister Doister" with the comedy which it is usual to regard as its most immediate successor. "Gammer Gurton's Needle" was published in 1575 as played "not longe ago in Christes Colledge in Cambridge," and written by a "Mr. S. Mr. of Art." The

[1] Cf. p. 24.

author has been variously identified as Dr. John Bridges, Dr. John Still, and latterly, with great show of probability, as William Stevenson.[1] If the last ascription is correct, the comedy can be referred pretty certainly to the year 1559–1560, under which date the college records of Christ's note the expenditure of 5s. at the acting of "Mr. Stevenson's plaie." In any case the work probably antedates July 22, 1563, when Th. Colwell, the future publisher, registered what appears to be the same play under the title of "Dyccon of Bedlam."

It is a striking circumstance that, whereas the perusal of "Roister Doister" impresses the student above all else with a sense of that play's classical restraint and careful attention to foreign rules of structure, the reader of "Gammer Gurton's Needle" feels predominantly the native, "romantic" features of the work. This difference of impression is important because it results almost wholly from a change of "atmosphere," and not from any essential variation in the dramatic method or the comic materials employed by the two authors. "Gammer Gurton's Needle" follows the Latin rules of form not a whit less closely than "Roister Doister." Both plays exemplify with equal care the well-articulated five-act division, the ancient practice of beginning a new scene with the arrival of each new figure,[2] the ordinary Roman fixed locale representing a street before several houses, and the limitation of the time of action to a single day. On the other hand, it cannot be held that the figures of "Roister Doister," vaguely reminiscent as they continually are of Latin

[1] See H. Bradley in Gayley's *Repr. Engl. Comedies*, 197 ff.

[2] A few exceptions to this rule occur in both plays.

comedy, are in any appreciable measure less true to the real life of London than are those of "Gammer Gurton" to the English village society which that comedy portrays. The difference between the plays arises from a subtler cause. It shows how the various classic importations, which in the earlier work betray their foreign origin and give to "Roister Doister," in spite of its really English plot, a rather stiff and unfamiliar movement, have been so thoroughly assimilated in "Gammer Gurton" that the reader nowhere feels them to be exotics. That twenty years — probably only ten — could show so great a progress is one of the special mysteries of Elizabethan dramatic transmutation. "Gammer Gurton's Needle" is on every true analysis a native English play, though its author has learned abroad the whole of his technique. In dealing with works of this sort we have to do not with foreign, but with naturalized influences.

Several of the characters in "Gammer Gurton's Needle" deserve closer study than can be asked for many of their predecessors in English comedy. The curate, Doctor Rat, shows one of the most popular of the old literary types, the vicious priest, in the very process of metamorphosis into his equally popular post-reformation substitute, the knavish but jovial parson, who appears, for instance, in "Misogonus," "Sir John Oldcastle," and "The Merry Devil of Edmonton." In the central figure of the piece, Diccon the Bedlam, a merry-spirited village Iago, laying plot upon plot with no other purpose than the gratification of his own super-subtle imagination, English drama received the very finest comic creation which it had yet to show.

In 1566, the students of Gray's Inn gave a new turn to theatrical development by acting a translation of Ariosto's Italian comedy, "Gli Suppositi" (The Substitutions), executed by one of their own number, George Gascoigne, and inaccurately entitled "The Supposes." Ariosto's play, first produced at Ferrara in 1509, was the direct result of a strong revival of interest in Latin drama, which since 1486 had manifested itself throughout northern Italy in most elaborate performances of Plautine and Terentian comedies. The "Suppositi" occupies much the same relation to Plautus in point of originality as does "Ralph Roister Doister." Most of the incidents and stock types are suggestive of the "Captivi" or other plays, while the actual working out of details, both of plot and character, is the author's own. But whereas the English comic tradition, upon which the writers of "Roister Doister" and "Gammer Gurton's Needle" rely for their individual touches, was hardly able to raise the product above the level of farce, Ariosto has overlaid his borrowed framework with an intricate romantic love story. The characters bear for the most part Italian names, and the scene is frankly laid in Ferrara, the city of presentation. It is true that the chief figures in this play, as in "Roister Doister," belong in general to the ancient types: the garrulous nurse, the aged lover, the parasite, the scheming servant, the old father. But these have become thoroughly Italianate, and they possess all the sensual vividness which made the literature of the Italian renaissance so objectionable to moralists like Ascham, and so irresistibly seductive to English lovers of romance. "The Supposes" inaugurates the taste for Italian character and plot so notably exemplified in

Shakespeare and all his great contemporaries. In many of the later instances, to be sure, this taste is inspired by mere convention and affectation, but it arose because in Gascoigne's time Italian influence was able to give the drama a romantic charm and plot interest, attainable neither from the development of native tendencies, nor from direct imitation of the Latin masters.

In "Misogonus" Italian example seems responsible for the existence of another early English comedy. This interesting work is extant in a damaged manuscript, signed on the first page: "Laurentius Bariona, Kettering, 1577." The names of Th. Richardes and Thomas Warde, of whom nothing further is definitely known, are appended to the Prologue, with precisely what significance is not clear. Recent proof amounting almost to certainty explains the Laurentius Bariona (*i. e.*, Bar-jona) of this piece and of a "Cometographia," dated likewise at Kettering a few months later, as a punning Hebraism for Lawrence Johnson, who proceeded M. A. of Christ's College, Cambridge in 1577.[1] It has been customary, on the strength of a single allusion of no great importance, to refer the composition of "Misogonus" to the year 1560, and to regard L. Bariona as the mere transcriber; but we now possess evidence of at least equal weight, thanks to the acute inferences of Professor Kittredge, for believing Bariona-Johnson the original author.

It is interesting to think of "Misogonus" as an academic piece, produced after the lapse of fifteen years by the same Cambridge Society (Christ's) before which "Gammer Gurton's Needle" had been performed. At all events, comparison of the two plays proves a con-

[1] See G. L. Kittredge, *Journal of Germanic Philology*, iii, 335.

siderable expansion in the range of comedy. On the one hand, "Misogonus" represents a return to the prodigal son theme common to many of the later interludes, such as "Nice Wanton," "The Disobedient Child," and "The Glass of Government." Many scenes of crude realism, like that in which the improvident son riots in the tavern with Sir John the Priest and the *meretrix* Melissa, belong to the same genre as the whole of "Gammer Gurton." But to enrich these themes, recourse has been had to Italy and romance. The nominal scene of the action is Laurentum, though in accordance with invariable Elizabethan practice characters and setting have been completely Anglicized. None of the suggestions so far hazarded concerning the specific source of the Italian plot is at all convincing, but it seems safe to assume that it was not in any great degree the invention of the English author. The story is a kind of converse of the famous Griseldis legend, which Petrarch and Boccaccio made illustrious, and which Chaucer's "Clerkes Tale" introduced to a lasting English vogue. The husband of Griseldis deprives her successively of their two infant children, whom, under pretence of causing to be slain, he sends to Bologna to be brought up by a female relative (his sister in Chaucer and Petrarch), whence he later restores them unexpectedly to the patient mother. In "Misogonus," it is the wife, who, upon giving birth to twin sons, despatches the elder secretly to her brother at Apollonia (or Polonia; *i. e.*, Bologna ?). There the boy, Eugonus, grows to manhood unknown, and is at last restored near the end of the piece in order to comfort his parent and punish the insolence of his vicious younger brother (Misogonus), the prodigal of the play.

"Misogonus" is a work of too mixed a nature to afford easy reading; but the individual scenes have considerable power, and the play marks a distinct step onward in dramatic progress. The realistic tavern scenes; the portrayal of the misguided "filius domesticus"; and the characters of Cacurgus, the intriguing "Will Summer," — half clown, half parasite, — of the various servants of Misogonus and his father, of Melissa, and Sir John; the good rustic figures of Codrus the farmer and his wife Alison, Isbell Busbey, and Madge Caro, belong all to the type of native farce remodelled on classical lines of which "Roister Doister" is the most correct and "Gammer Gurton's Needle" probably the most successful example. The author of "Misogonus" has, however, strained his play to include a third element of dramatic interest which the taste of his time was beginning to demand. Besides the realistic portrayal of common life which was indigenous on the English stage, and the structural method which came from Rome, he has recognized the need of a graceful human story, and he appears to have borrowed the main thread of his plot from Italian romance. If the reader must admit that these elements are by no means perfectly blended, it is none the less inevitable that he perceive the vigor of each and realize that each has found its place in answer to a real dramatic want. Barring individual genius and the assimilative force of twenty years of theatrical practice, "Misogonus" exemplifies every element of plot and every rule of structure which goes to make up such a play as "The Taming of the Shrew."

The anonymous play of "The Bugbears" shows Italian influence exerted upon the Latin-English type

of comedy in a manner neither so immediate as in Gascoigne's confessed translation, nor so casual as in "Bariona's" grafting of a possibly non-dramatic romantic plot upon a stock of native farce. "The Bugbears" is based primarily, and in parts very closely, upon "La Spiritata" of Ant. Francesco Grazzini (d. 1583), but its dependence is by no means slavish. Besides altering the names of his characters, the author of the English play has changed the comic fable, and has enriched his work by importation both from other Italian comedies such as "Gl' Ingannati" and the "Suppositi," and also it would appear, directly from Terence's "Andria."

Compared with "Misogonus," this comedy recommends itself by its unified and well-managed plot; compared with "The Supposes," it shows a freedom in selection and variation of borrowed material, which forbids us to regard it as a pure exotic. Historically, it is probably less important than either of these pieces. Since its main source, "La Spiritata," is supposed to have been first printed in 1561, it is unlikely that it will be able to displace "The Supposes" from its position as the first English adaptation of Italian comedy. Nor, on the other hand, does it manifest the juxtaposition of native and foreign elements, which renders "Misogonus" so interesting a document in Elizabethan stage history. Intrinsically, however, "The Bugbears," which treats the popular Roman theme of the outwitting of aged greed by youthful love, is certainly one of the most successful products of Italian adaptation. Less purely imitative than "The Supposes," and less awkwardly transitional than "Misogonus," it is perhaps the first finished English comedy of its species. In its principal device of the mock conjurer it is the

forerunner of a whole group of Jacobean plays, such as "The Puritan," "The Alchemist," and "Albumazar."

"Fedele and Fortunio," or as the head-title of the extant edition has it, "The pleasaunt and fine conceited Comœdie of two Italian Gentlemen, with the merie deuises of Captaine Crack-stone," is a free adaptation of "Il Fedele" by Luigi Pasqualigo (1575), and was entered on the Stationers' Register, November 12, 1584. This play, which Collier ascribed to Anthony Munday[1] on the strength of a dedication signed "A. M.," seems to have been very commonly known in its day, and it makes fair reading still. The artificial complication of love-plots, the clever trifling with the arts of incantation and the stock figures of braggart and pedant hold the interest; while the play possesses two adventitious claims to attention by reason of its employment of the same trick through which Don John deceives Claudio in "Much Ado About Nothing," and by its neat illustration of the possibilities of the Elizabethan upper, or balcony, stage in connection with the fixed Roman street scene.

John Lyly is the first dominating personality that confronts the historian of the English drama. His connection with the London stage, inaugurated about the year 1580, and rapidly followed by the appearance of other noteworthy figures, begins a new era, and necessitates on the part of the critic a new estimate of the relation between the individual dramatist and the dramatic type. Hitherto, the playwrights of two centuries, figures often nameless and generally obscure, present

[1] Chapman has a better claim. See *Malone Soc.* "Collections," I, 221 ff.

themselves to the student normally and properly as exponents of one strain or another in theatric evolution. Henceforth, it is rather the play, in the most conspicuous and important cases, which becomes subsidiary to the reflection of the personality and character of the poet. Thus judicial interest in the dramatic species gives place ordinarily to appreciation of the individual dramatist. Yet it is by no means wise at this point to disregard the old threads of influence; for if it be true that they grow tangled by the caprice of personal genius, it is none the less certain that these same threads can still be traced through all the processes of the loom, and that they determine by their presence or absence the color and texture of the resultant fabric.

The eight accepted plays of Lyly manifest no less certainly, though in far subtler fashion than the simpler works with which we have been dealing, the Latin influence upon English comedy. When Lyly wrote, the courtly drama with which he allied himself had already assimilated the technical lessons derived from the practice of Plautus and Terence. Scene and act division, stock types like the parasite, the amiably knavish "boy" or servant, and the greedy parent were established institutions on the fashionable stage; and Terentian imitation was become conventional, if not spontaneous. "Mother Bombie," one of the latest of Lyly's comedies (*ca.* 1590), is a remarkably successful adaptation of the Roman comic type to an English setting. The four old men, mutually deceiving and deceived; the three pairs of lovers taught by the pages to outwit their elders; and the motive of infant substitution, are all antique borrowings adjusted to

the environment of Rochester, and vitalized by a genuinely English humor. This play depends, like its Roman predecessors, entirely upon the involved intrigue and the wit of the dialogue; and it indicates the establishment of a type of comedy modelled on classic lines, which, though far from being adequately expressive of the Elizabethan dramatic spirit, yet maintained itself to the end of the period.

In the other comedies of Lyly, an entirely new relation to classical sources betrays itself, — a relation analogous to that manifested in the Roman tragedies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. English classic drama here emerges from its period of conscious pupilship. At this epoch the lessons derived from the Latin playwrights had been so thoroughly mastered as to appear almost indigenous; and dramatists who, like Lyly, give a general adhesion to classic rules of structure, and ring the changes on such popular types as the cunning witty servant or the pompous braggart, were probably no longer seriously mindful of their debt. Lyly's confessed obligation to Roman literature is, indeed, more a matter of content than of form. Coming up to London about 1578 with the prestige of an Oxford M. A. received some three years earlier, Lyly embarked upon a courtier's career under the influential patronage of Burghley and Burghley's son-in-law, the Earl of Oxford. Successively, he achieved social fame as an innovator in the two departments of fashionable fiction and fashionable drama, distinguishing himself in both by the freshness of his method and his extraordinary tact in apprehending and fixing the momentary taste of society. In "Euphues" (1578, 1580), he gave form and an undeserved degree of permanence to the pre-

vailing aspiration after an elaborate artificial prose, rich in figure and conceit; and the success of euphuism furnished him with the most valuable of his resources when, soon after the appearance of his novel, he commenced dramatist. The employment of prose in comedy, purely casual in Gascoigne's translation of the "Suppositi," was in Lyly a deliberate effort at utilizing a special asset of the writer, — his popular euphuistic style.

Lyly soon found himself in a position closely resembling that which John Heywood had occupied two generations earlier, — commissioned, that is, to offer plays for presentation before noble audiences by the boys' companies of Paul's and the Queen's Chapel. Under these circumstances he appears to have labored for the attainment of two principal aims: novelty and ephemeral appropriateness. As a professed scholar, catering to a public whose *penchant* was scholarism, it was nearly inevitable that he should turn to the classics for his inspiration. From the Latin comic poets, however, he could gain little of what he particularly sought. Plautus and Terence had been already laid under contribution, as we have seen. The best they had to offer in the way of form and plot had become far too familiar for the ambitious innovator, whose business it was to create a well-bred sensation. In "Mother Bombie" alone, which dates probably as late as 1589 or 1590, was Lyly content to stick to dramatic precedent and turn out a correct and not unconventional comedy after the Terentian model. His other plays are marked by a striving for the unique and graceful at whatever cost to the plot; and the qualities which he required he discovered most abundantly among the non-dramatic

classics. In ancient tradition and history, as related by writers familiar to the Elizabethans, such as Pliny, Hyginus, Ælian, and, above all, Ovid, Lyly had at hand a wealth of material, which, in addition to its unfading daintiness, its comparative novelty on the English stage and its tremendous vogue elsewhere, possessed the transcendent advantage that classic mythology was in his day the universally understood language of courtly allegory and adulation.

In "Campaspe," which was probably his first play, Lyly was content with the simple dramatization of an incident in the life of Alexander the Great, derived, as Mr. Bond has shown, from a chance anecdote in Pliny's Natural History (Bk. 35, ch. x), and from Plutarch's Life of Alexander, published very shortly before in North's translation (1579).[1] For the deepening of the faint picture of ancient Athens thus secured, the poet very artlessly introduces the philosopher Diogenes, dragged periodically upon the stage in his tub to insult the world-conqueror or abuse his fellow citizens. A third independent element in this technically crude piece is constituted by the three humorous servants, Granichus, Manes, and Psyllus, who are borrowed from the current Terentian comedy of the day.

Fundamentally, then, the important classical influence in "Campaspe" is the fruit rather of the quest for novelty than of artistic conviction. Lyly's attitude to his sources is here more nearly that of Pikering, author of the transitional medley "Horestes," than that of Udall's critical school. Keenly desirous of fresh subjects, but lacking any special dramatic theory, Pikering and Lyly both turned naturally to the great magnet of

[1] See *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii, 306 ff.

renaissance study, the ancient literatures, and took thence what was their most obvious superficial need, — an interesting fable. This fable each developed somewhat roughly and without great evidence of individual dramatic initiative, after the fashion of his day. The difference between the two plays is no false measure of the progress achieved by English drama under classic guidance between the years 1560 and 1580. Pikering writes in a variety of rime forms without definite act or scene division, and he depends for comic relief upon passages of rustic buffoonery derived from the morality convention. Lyly, following the fashion of the moment in the case of "Campaspe" with equal docility, divides his play into acts and scenes as a matter of course, though he shows himself ignorant of the technical advantages of this structure; and for the desired comic padding of his romantic drama, he resorts as naturally to the popular Latin theme of servant trickery as had Pikering to the old native clownage. Instead of the rough verse of "Horestes," Lyly substitutes prose of a highly euphuistic tone; and this, the only technical feature of "Campaspe" which can at all be termed original, is patently the result, not of critical dramatic theory, but of the author's successful practice in another branch of literature.

The six plays most representative of Lyly's individual dramatic method fall naturally into two groups. Three of them — "Sapho and Phao" (1582 ?), "Endimion" (1586 ?), and "Midas" (1589 ?) — derive their plots from Latin mythology, and are obviously allegorical in nature. The other three — "Gallathea" (1584 ?), "Love's Metamorphosis" (1588–1589), and "The Woman in the Moon" (1591?) — though full of classic

reminiscence, have in the main original pastoral plots, and if at all symbolic, are not predominantly or continuously so. In these six dramas, Lyly shows a genius as fresh and at the same time as fantastic as that which he had earlier displayed in the prose innovations of "Euphues": and he illustrates a new phase in the relation between the English stage and the ancients. In a sense Lyly may be said to have entirely reversed the procedure of the early sponsors of classic influence. The mission of Udall and his fellows had been to bring the structure of English drama into conformity with Latin rule. Lyly takes upon himself the bolder task of forcing Latin story into harmony with native taste and contemporary interest; and his plays, therefore, while evidencing everywhere the domestication of the formal lessons of Latin dramaturgy, show further that the period of close discipleship to Rome had passed, and that the English stage was now quite capable of aggressive assertion of its peculiar interests.

The general interpretation of two of Lyly's allegorical comedies is hardly subject to doubt, and has not yet been questioned by any sane critic. "Sapho and Phao" is very obviously a flattering allusion to the matrimonial fiasco between Elizabeth and the Duc d'Alençon, which, after dragging through a number of years, ended suddenly in nothing on February 6, 1582, — about a month, it seems, before the play was presented. Even more unmistakably "Midas" is a personal satire directed against the folly, rapacity, and cruelty of Philip II of Spain, and prompted by the general triumph over the *débâcle* of the Armada in 1588.

It is unfortunate, but not unnatural, that the understanding of "Endimion," the most intricate and pi-

quant of these allegorical plays, is at present obstructed by the existence of four rival interpretations, which are mutually contradictory, and which seem to me all super-subtle. In order to walk straight through the maze of conjecture and *parti-pris*, which thus besets the student of this comedy, it is necessary to keep in mind the reasonable limitations and the probable purposes of courtly allegory. Lyly's procedure in "Sapho and Phao" and in "Midas" certainly bears out inherent likelihood in indicating that the deliberate symbolism does not extend beyond a few of the most conspicuous figures; and that these figures, together with the occurrences among which they move, have a courtly and personal, rather than political, significance. The poet's desire, one would imagine, must certainly have been to deal with *faits accomplis* in such a manner as to flatter the person of principal importance — that is, the Queen — rather than to venture upon the hazardous course of upholding any particular court faction in a controversy still unsettled. Altogether, it seems clear that the story of the play, instead of reflecting in detail the real incidents of contemporary history, is rather a tissue of harmlessly imaginary pictures shot through with idealized references to such actual happenings as the poet might feel to be wholly devoid of offence to his royal auditress. The natural interpretation of the comedy, and the only one so far suggested which seems to rest on sane and logical premises, is that it delicately adumbrates the relations between the Queen and Leicester, representing Elizabeth, of course, in Cynthia, the Earl in Endimion. Leicester's third wife, Lettice, Countess of Essex, seems to be portrayed in Tellus; and possibly Lyly's patron Burghley in Eumenides, the

faithful servant and adviser of Cynthia, who reprimands the aspiring Endimion, and afterward by his generosity makes possible the latter's reconciliation with Cynthia. In the years just before and after 1579, this affair had been very acute; but in 1585–1586, when "Endimion" seems to have been written, the crisis was apparently well past. Leicester had ostensibly abjured his exorbitant ambition for the Queen's personal favor, Elizabeth's anger at his secret marriage had cooled, and the earl was at the moment engaged in military service in the Low Countries.[1]

There seems, then, good cause to regard "Endimion" as a loose, but infinitely tactful and graceful sketch of the relations of Elizabeth and Leicester previous to 1585. Leicester's presumptuous pursuit of the celestial beauty, and his juggling between Tellus and Cynthia, are punished by that mistrust on the part of the sovereign which actually existed strongly for several years after 1579, and to which the play repeatedly alludes. The consequences are represented in the sleep into which Endimion falls, thus losing the youthful beauty naturally belonging to him as Elizabeth's avowed lover and lying dead (*i. e.*, disgraced at court), — till his overweening arrogance has been chastened, when the magnanimity of Eumenides and the lofty compassion of Cynthia restore him to purely political and impersonal favor. Meantime, Cynthia is, of course, presented — as the Queen would demand to appear, and as Shakespeare also paints her — as continuing through the play "in maiden meditation fancy-free," entirely una-

[1] A more detailed exposition of the interpretation here indicated will be found in a paper on "The Allegory in Lyly's Endimion," *Modern Language Notes*, Jan., 1911.

ware of the overwhelming adoration which she has inspired in sublunary breasts.

Beside this fanciful and allegorical matter, which owes only the vaguest debt to classic literature, Lyly interweaves in each of the three plays under discussion purely farcical Plautine scenes of dupery and servant wit, such as he had already attempted in "Campaspe"; and he succeeds better than one would expect in blending the unlike strains. In "Sapho and Phao," the underplot is slightest and least suggestive of Latin comedy. Indeed, the scenes which portray Trachinus the courtier and the scholar Pandion, with their pages, Criticus and Molus, are rather unsuccessful original efforts in the "Euphues" vein than importations from Rome. But in the other allegories the Plautine influence is clear and increasingly strong. In "Endimion" it makes up about a third of the play, in "Midas" nearly a full half. It has perhaps not been sufficiently noted that Lyly was setting an example for Shakespeare in thus mingling the impalpably imaginary with the most opaque realism. The Sir Tophas-Epiton-Bagoa scenes in "Endimion" were certainly imitated in the Armado-Moth-Jaquenetta matter of "Love's Labour's Lost," and Shakespeare's bringing together of Titania and Bottom in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" is only that young poet's direct development of Lyly's practice.

Lyly's three pastoral plays differ radically among themselves, and are likely to impress the reader as casual, tentative productions, defective like "Campaspe" in conscious dramatic purpose, and lacking the deftness of execution which the author developed in his handling of court allegory. The most attractive of

the three is the earliest, "Gallathea," with its rather pleasing picture of an imaginary pastoral Lincolnshire, tenanted by pagan deities, nymphs, and sea-monsters. The absurd plot leads to an utterly absurd conclusion, but the atmosphere of the piece is delicately alluring. The similarity of at least one of the love scenes between the maidens Gallathea and Phillida, disguised as boys (IV, iv), and those between Orlando and the false Ganimede shows that this play also formed part of the dramatic equipment of Shakespeare. "Love's Metamorphosis" offers a dramatic version of the eighth book of Ovid, combined with a slight and purely fanciful story of nymphs and foresters. "The Woman in the Moon," the only one of Lyly's accepted plays written in verse, has no underplot, and is further remarkable as a portrayal in very large part of the frailties of women, — in noteworthy contrast to the author's usual cringing attitude to the other sex. The mock mythology upon which this play depends is rather poor stuff, and the picture of the woes of the four Arcadian shepherds and the clownish servant Gunophilus at the hands of the beautiful vixen Pandora, though animated, has none of the stately charm and delicacy of Lyly's more characteristic method.

It was only in his three allegorical comedies that Lyly effected a great advance in the relation of English drama to classic literature. In the case of the pastoral plays just named, he appears to have been groping somewhat darkly in a region where other poets were already moving with considerable freedom. Masque-like productions, such as Gascoigne's show of Zabeta, prepared among the "princely pleasures" at Kenilworth in 1575, Churchyard's "Entertainment in Suf-

folk and Norfolk" (1578), and Sidney's "Lady of May" of the latter year, show how blended figures from Utopian shepherd life and from orthodox or invented mythology were being extensively exploited on the fashionable amateur stage. Furthermore, the type of mythological pastoral, to which Shakespeare offered partial homage in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," had attained full development at a period level with Lyly's earliest dramatic efforts in the charming work of a sweeter and truer poet than Lyly,—in George Peele's "Arraignment of Paris" (1581?). This delightful dramatic idyl illustrates equally with the plays of Lyly the tendency of the Elizabethan stage to turn from the cold realism of the classic comedy to the more romantic narrative poets. The preponderating Latin influence upon Lyly is everywhere Ovid. In the case of Peele, it is Vergil. The shepherds of "The Arraignment of Paris," moreover, have names and characters borrowed from Spenser's "Shepherds' Calendar" (1579), and Spenser's debt, like Peele's, goes back to the Mantuan poet, partly direct, partly through the medium of Clement Marot and the other French Vergilians of the "Pleiade."

A yet more advanced position is held by "The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune," published in 1589, and announced as "Plaide before the Queenes most excellent Maiestie." This work introduces the gods and goddesses of Greek belief merely as a kind of chorus and explanation to a pretty story of thwarted princely lovers, who wander from court to forest and back again, finally receiving their happiness by special arrangement between Jupiter, Fortune, and Venus. As regards the human figures, "The Rare Triumphs" is almost pure

romantic drama, owing its effects to the sometimes amusing, sometimes startling actions of the disguised benevolent hermit, and to the triangle of passion which evolves itself between the heroine, her lover, and her brother. Only in the figure of the mischief-making parasite, Penulo, and in the Olympian framework does there remain any trace of the classic note which had been so dominant in earlier attempts to catch the fancy of the Queen.

And so one finds on retrospect that the influence of classical literature upon the English comic stage, which had begun to manifest itself slightly before the accession of Elizabeth as a mechanical agent in the establishment of principles of structure and the dissemination of a fashion for Plautine realism, was by 1590 showing itself mainly in works of pure fancy. The contrast is only one manifestation of the general deepening of the romantic cast of drama, which made itself everywhere felt during the great decade of Elizabethan comedy (1590–1600),—not only in the court plays we have treated, but in the more catholic "romantic comedies" of Greene and Shakespeare. Viewed in connection with the sudden revulsion to realism after 1600, this brief reign of imaginative ideality in the *fin de siècle* comedy becomes one of the most conspicuous and significant indications of the spirit of the epoch.

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CHAPTER VI

CLASSICAL INFLUENCE IN TRAGEDY

In certain points of outward form — notably in the matter of act and scene division, and in the nowhere dominant tendency toward unity of time and place — Roman comedy and tragedy exerted upon the English drama a practically identical influence. Imitations of Seneca's tragedies followed very close upon the introduction of Plautine comedy, and in the case of such tragi-comical medleys as "Damon and Pithias" it is hardly practicable to determine the exact provenance of the classical elements. One of the results of Latin study was, however, a growing appreciation of the difference between comedy and tragedy, and a consideration of the Elizabethan plays moulded on Roman precedent shows that Senecan tragedy exercised over the drama a force not altogether analogous to that of the Latin comic writers. This diversity of effect is accounted for not by any great disparity in power between the comedy and the tragedy of Rome, but by the very striking difference in the degree in which the native English stage was adapted to the development of comic and tragic themes.

The interlude had evolved entirely in the direction of comedy, and hence had kept alive popular interest in this form of drama alone. The earliest imitations of Plautus and Terence found a general public not only prepared to appreciate them, but positively eager for improvement and novelty in this line. From the very

first, therefore, classical English comedy had a popular tone. Such early academic efforts even as "Roister Doister" and "Gammer Gurton's Needle" — the one destined almost certainly for presentation as a school exercise, the other for performance at a Cambridge college — have a perfectly general appeal, and show a large if not predominating infusion of native humorous material. The domestication and nationalizing of Latin comic influence was thus immediate because of the vigor and assimilative force of native English comedy.

The first imitators of Latin tragedy, on the other hand, appealed to no established taste and satisfied no conscious popular want. Thirty years of Elizabeth's reign, indeed, passed before any widespread public interest in genuine tragedy manifested itself. Appealing only to limited circles of scholarly amateurs and affected by no home-born conventions or precedents, the English followers of Seneca remained considerably nearer to their original than the adapters of Latin comedy; and they started a fashion of academic tragedy which maintained itself in successive phases through the entire reign of Elizabeth, wholly independent of the popular stage and usually in opposition to it.

The ultimate model of classic tragedy was furnished for the Elizabethans by the ten plays ascribed to the philosopher Seneca. Of these dramas, widely studied in renaissance Europe, at least six had appeared in English translation between the years 1559 and 1566;[1] and in 1581 the different versions were collected into a single volume by Thomas Newton, with the addition of the omitted "Thebais," "Hippolytus," and "Her-

[1] A translation of a seventh play, *Octavia*, was printed about the same time, without date.

cules Œtæus."[1] As in the case of comedy, Latin tragedy exercised an indirect control over English drama through the means of Italian imitation; and during the last two decades of the Tudor period a third wave of influence reached the country in the efforts of the Countess of Pembroke's coterie to domesticate the work of the French Senecan school. Contact with Greek tragedy is evident only in Lady Lumley's dilettante rendering of "Iphigenia at Aulis," preserved in a single private manuscript; and very indirectly in the "Jocasta," translated by Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh from Dolce's Italian play, which is itself a variation at second hand of Euripides.

Elizabethan tragedy borrowed from Seneca and long retained the ghost, the chorus, and the predilection for gruesome plots involving hereditary sin or unnatural crime. The great and lasting contribution was, of course, blank verse, — a happy accident first hit upon by Surrey as a substitute for Vergilian hexameter, and confirmed by the authors of "Gorboduc" as the representative of the Senecan senarius. For this all important innovation Latin tragedy can claim only indirect credit. Yet without the example it afforded it might have been long before English playwrights discarded the undramatic stanzaic verse and the slovenly alexandrines or "fourteeners" of the day. Other features of Seneca's style — his tendency to extended self-analysis and reflection, his love of sententious epigram and the cut and thrust of sticho-mythic dialogue — were

[1] The translation of the *Thebais*, which is fragmentary, was made by Newton, the editor of the collection. The versions of the other two plays, by John Studley, were probably contemporary with Studley's renderings of *Agamemnon* and *Medea*, printed in 1566.

carefully transplanted into English tragedy, where they did much to create a sense of form and to raise the drama to the dignity of a conscious literary product, a dignity to which it originally made no claim and which it was long in winning.

Pure Senecan tragedy was always in the nature of an academic exercise, occupying a middle ground between the popular theatre and the collegiate patronage of untranslated Latin drama. The first extant example of the type, and therefore the earliest strict tragedy in the English vernacular, is "Ferrex and Porrex," or "The Tragedie of Gorboduc," as the first, unauthorized, edition of the play less aptly terms it. Concerning the external history of this work a considerable amount of information is preserved by the various title-pages and prefaces. It was written — the first three acts by Thomas Norton, the rest by Thomas Sackville, later Earl of Dorset — for performance before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall on January 18, 1561–1562. In 1565, an imperfect and pirated edition was brought out surreptitiously, and some five years later the authors saw fit to publish the true version.

As an equivalent of the horrors of Greek mythology, the writers of "Ferrex and Porrex" and several other Senecan tragedies chose gruesome passages from the mythical history of Britain. These stories of the legendary descendants of Brute, derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Historia Britonum," became one of the most fruitful sources of Elizabethan dramatic plot, furnishing forth at least ten extant plays, of which two are the acknowledged and two others the reputed performances of Shakespeare.[1] The later workers in this

[1] Viz., *King Lear, Cymbeline, Locrine, The Birth of Merlin.*

field were attracted to it mainly by the idyllic charm of the Arthurian atmosphere and the romantic excitement of the incidents; but the inaugurators of the Senecan method turned thither undoubtedly in search of the ghastly horror which the Roman dramatist had found and exploited in Greek legend, and they did not scruple to distort Geoffrey's narrative in order to bring into bold relief the favorite Latin themes of ancestral impiety and avenging fate.

The authors of "Ferrex and Porrex" wrote with a purpose. It was their design to present before the young queen, who had sat only four years upon her throne, a lurid picture of the terrors attendant upon an unsettled succession. The disastrous folly of the old king Gorboduc, who Lear-like transmits and divides his trust of sovereignty before death has relieved him of it; the discord, and the unnatural fate that befalls each of the jointly ruling sons, Ferrex and Porrex, and the black consequences of the original fault in extirpation of the sinning family and ruin of the kingdom constitute a theme suggestive at once of the Greek story of the war of the sons of Œdipus and the destruction of Thebes. Except only in disregarding the unities of time and place, the treatment follows step by step the practice of Seneca and the rules of Horace till the close of the fourth act, where, the tragedy having properly concluded in the death of all the main figures, the author (Sackville) permits himself a dramatically supererogatory excursus upon the sufferings of an ungoverned state. It is doubtless true, as Professor Manly remarks, that the play really exists for the sake of this excrescent fifth act and the numerous homiletic passages in the earlier part, all designed to make clear to

TITLE-PAGE OF WILLIAM ALABASTER'S LATIN TRAGEDY OF "ROXANA," 1632

Giving a picture of an academic stage, with actors and audience

the royal auditress her duty of preserving the throne by immediate marriage from the danger of conflicting claimants.

The blank verse of "Ferrex and Porrex," that ascribed to Norton hardly less than the more famous verse of Sackville, is remarkably regular and euphonious. From this accurate, if somewhat too sedate, metre to that of Marlowe is certainly a long step, but it is only one; and it can hardly be said that the quarter century which intervened between this play and "Tamburlaine" produced any very material advance in point of versification. The peculiar characteristics of the drama and the way in which it measured up to sixteenth-century critical standards are both indicated very fairly in Sidney's famous appreciation:[1] "It is full of stately speeches and well sounding Phrases, clyming to the height of Seneca his stile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtayne the very end of Poesie."

"Ferrex and Porrex" domesticated in English Senecan tragedy a characteristic which, though possessing no counterpart in the classical drama, became as notable a feature of the type as the ghost or the chorus. This was the dumb-show, which preceded each act even as the chorus followed it, — the one symbolizing pictorially the events to ensue, the other pointing the moral and reporting briefly such circumstances as could not conveniently be staged. The dumb-show is the only significant element which early Senecan drama derived from native convention: it seems to have been in the main a heritage taken over by this new aristocratic species from the older court and collegiate per-

[1] *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. Shuckburgh, 51, 52.

formances, and it is properly an evidence of the select and undemocratic nature of the plays in which it appears.[1]

Throughout the Tudor period fashionable celebrations at Christmas and upon other gala occasions had been accompanied by elaborate mummings and tableaux, under the direction of a Lord of Misrule. The records of the Revels Office bear witness to the costly nature of such entertainments, even during the reign of the earlier monarchs, and the surpassing extravagance of the Jacobean masques is well known. The introduction of the ornamental dumb-show before the various acts of the courtly Senecan tragedy was probably in some measure the result of an attempt to combine with genuine dramatic interest the scenic display possessed by these rival attractions of fashionable merry-making.

The Senecan ideal of tragedy held the scholarly stage virtually unchanged for nearly a generation. In the crucial year of Elizabeth's reign, 1587, eight gentlemen of Gray's Inn, of whom Thomas Hughes was the chief and Francis Bacon the most famous, presented before the Queen at Greenwich a play generally referred to as "The Misfortunes of Arthur." This work represents no change of structure or theory from the drama of Norton and Sackville, which the Queen had witnessed six-and-twenty years before. In the later play, as in the earlier, we have the disregard of unities coupled with the careful observance of classic rule

[1] For a discussion of the subsidiary Italian influence upon the development of the dumb-show, see J. W. Cunliffe, "Italian Prototypes of the Masque and Dumb Show," *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xxii (1907).

in all other respects. Indeed, Hughes far exceeds his predecessors in servile imitation. The poetry of Sackville and Norton is original, though their method and to some extent their ideas are borrowed; but Professor Cunliffe prints twenty-five solid pages of parallel passages, wherein Hughes has cribbed the very words of Seneca.[1] The Senecan chorus, messengers, and tricks of style remain, and "The Misfortunes of Arthur" agrees with "Gorboduc" in far outgoing Seneca in the observance of Horace's caution against the stage presentation of gruesome incident ("De Arte Poetica," 185–187). No sort of action occurs in view of the spectators, though the reports of chorus and nuntius reek with blood and horror. The dumb-shows in this play are of unparalleled complexity, and their designing appears to have absorbed the entire energies of three of the joint authors. The most remarkable thing about the altogether puerile and insipid piece is the distortion to which the great Arthurian story has been subjected in the effort to make it conform exactly to the Senecan model. The ghost of Gorlois prologizes like Seneca's ghost of Tantalus ("Thyestes"), and the whole romance of the house of Uther, as well as all the heroism of Arthur's character, is flattened and dissipated by being dragged into agreement with the history of the house of Atreus, and treated as a vulgar narrative of transmitted sin.

In addition to their constant discipleship to Seneca, the devotees of scholarly tragedy studied with some effect the practice of the Italian renaissance theatre. The ruling influence in Italian tragedy, as in English,

[1] See J. W. Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy.*

was Seneca, but a connection with Euripides existed in a work already mentioned, — Lodovico Dolce's free translation, through the medium of a Latin version, of the "Phœnissæ" (1559). Dolce's play was entitled "Giocasta," and as "Jocasta" was translated into English by George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh for presentation at Gray's Inn in 1566. The drama claims to be a rendering of the original Greek, "translated and digested into Acte"; but it follows Dolce throughout with the hap-hazard fidelity usual to sixteenth-century translations, only inserting before each act the dumb-shows which the English fashion of the time demanded, and appending an "Epilogus" by the same Christopher Yelverton who twenty years later took a hand in arranging the dumb-shows of "The Misfortunes of Arthur."

The honors of courtly tragic innovation are equally divided between the two legal societies of Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple. To the credit of the former belong among extant plays the Italianate work we have just been discussing and "The Misfortunes of Arthur," while for the Inner Temple the scale is precisely balanced by "Ferrex and Porrex" and the slightly later "Gismond of Salerne in Love," acted before the Queen in 1568. This last play dramatizes a well-known Italian story in accordance with the rules of Senecan tragedy. Like all the other existing specimens of the type, it is the result of collaboration, five writers being in some way concerned in the performance. The most striking feature of "Gismond of Salerne" is the tendency to disregard the rule against the ocular presentation of horror and bloodshed, — a rule which Seneca had himself several times broken, but which the cultivators of

English classic tragedy ordinarily observed very punctiliously. The heroine here dies in the sight of the audience, and the hero's heart is brought bleeding upon the stage. When Robert Wilmot, one of the original authors, came to revise the play for publication in 1591, it was entirely natural that he should considerably intensify these features, which the success of Kyd's tragedy and Marlowe's had then made the passion of the hour.

By one of the striking ironies of literary history, the same year (1587) which presented before Queen Elizabeth in "The Misfortunes of Arthur" the most inept probably of all the Senecan imitations, brought before the general London populace two plays that wrecked forever the prospects of English classical tragedy: Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" and Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy." The latter play is, however, itself in large measure the result of the working of Latin example, and its origin and influence will require discussion in this chapter.

But the academic Senecan tragedy, though permanently severed by the developments of Kyd and Marlowe from the possibility of general influence on healthy dramatic evolution, persisted under altered conditions for twenty years longer in a curious group of eleven plays, all written probably in consequence of the impulse of a society whose president was the eccentric Lady Mary Sidney,[1] Countess of Pembroke. Exclusiveness was before all things the character of this

[1] It is a convention of long standing to refer to the lady by this name, which emphasizes her connection with her brother, Sir Philip. Technically, of course, her surname after 1577 was Herbert, by reason of her marriage to the Earl of Pembroke.

circle, and its productions, though conducing in no respect to catholic or permanent results, form one of the most interesting backwaters which issue from the main dramatic current and finally disappear in the sandy waste of affectation. For a time there was about these literary exquisites a certain vigor and considerable poetic freshness.

The earlier patrons of classical tragedy had modelled their works either directly upon the plays of Seneca or upon Italian imitations. The Countess of Pembroke and her followers took as their pattern the French Senecan dramatist, Robert Garnier (1534–1590), whose eight plays ("Porcie," 1568; "Hippolyte," 1573; "Cornélie," 1574; "Marc-Antoine," 1578; "La Troade," 1578; "Antigone," 1579; "Les Juives," 1580; and "Bradamante," 1580) had already been repeatedly published both singly and in collected editions. The English school began unostentatiously with simple translation of the admired works, Lady Pembroke inaugurating the movement with her version of "Antonie," executed in 1590 and published two years later. In 1594 Thomas Kyd produced a rendering of the "Cornélie," which he inscribed to the Countess of Sussex with the promise, presumably never fulfilled, of an immediate translation of another of Garnier's Roman tragedies, the "Portie."

The differences between the tragedies of Seneca and the Franco-Latin plays which at this period were attracting the fastidious notice of the English bluestockings are rather striking. Garnier, like most of the French classicists, made a point of outdoing his masters in all that pertained to correctness. The melodramatic sensationalism of the Latin poet — the feature which

made him in a sense the father of English tragedy — is carefully pruned from the plays of Garnier. The ghost is banished as ill-bred; stage action, so far as it existed, carefully replaced by seemly moralizing and tedious narrative. The part of the chorus is increased and the lyric effect in every way intensified. Dramatic conflict and spectacular interest are refined away, and the plays affect the reader solely as collections of graceful elegiacs. A few lines from Cleopatra's speech at the opening of the fifth act of the "Antonie," which gives everywhere a very close rendering of Garnier's French, will indicate the characteristic features of sentiment and expression:—

> "*Cleop.* O cruell Fortune, o accursed lott!
> O plaguy loue! o most detested brand!
> O wretched ioyes! o beauties miserable!
> O deadlie state! o deadly roialtie!
> O hatefull life! o Queene most lamentable!
> O Antonie by my fault buriable!
> O hellish worke of heau'n! alas! the wrath
> Of all the Gods at once on vs is falne!"

The "Cornélie," which Kyd took upon himself to translate, is probably of all Garnier's plays the most deficient in dramatic incident. The entire interest is retrospective. Throughout the five acts Cornelia laments the death of her husband and her father, or bandies rhetoric with her consolers. Cæsar and Mark Antony, Cassius and Brutus, are introduced in couples to give the work historical body, but there is no shred of plot. The number of characters on the stage in addition to the chorus never exceeds two and is more frequently limited to one. The entire value of the piece is measured by the neat finish of the dialogue and the

rhythmic beauty of the choral songs. There are few circumstances more striking when considered as curiosities of literature, or when seriously examined, more illustrative of the wavering dramatic ideals of the period, than the fact that the author who in 1587 had achieved the tremendous popular success of "The Spanish Tragedy" should seven years later have produced the version of the "Cornelia." The two works are antipodal, and the existence of the earlier rendered the production of the other a mockery and labor lost. But the writer was far from realizing this, and the contemporary status of the drama was such that he could slight, to all appearances, the great popular work and find cause of pride and profit in his humble adherence to an aristocratic whimsy. Instances like this sound a warning against depreciation of the academic drama. It is very likely that the subterranean influence of this superficially trivial and detached species was much more potent than now appears.

In the same year in which Kyd's "Cornelia" appeared, Samuel Daniel, the greatest of the regular supporters of the school of Garnier, produced in the "Tragedy of Cleopatra" the finest play of this type. "Cleopatra" is not a rendering from the French, but a continuation in Garnier's style of the "Antonie," which Daniel's patroness had recently translated. In 1598 an additional link in the chain of Antony and Cleopatra dramas was forged by Samuel Brandon, an obscure member of the same coterie; and in 1605 Daniel published a second classical tragedy, drawn from Plutarch's Life of Alexander and entitled "Philotas." An interesting evidence of the parallel development of academic tragedy in court and college circles is

afforded by Daniel's kindly allusion to a play on the same subject as his own by his "deare friend D. Lateware," which had been "presented in St. Johns Colledge in Oxford, where as I after heard, it was worthily and with great applause performed."

Another member of the Sidney circle, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, created a slight diversion in "Alaham" and "Mustapha," plays rigidly classical in form, but original in content, the subject being in the one case the author's invention and in the other an adaptation of oriental history.

With this group of classical tragedies, all the fruit of the scholarly enthusiasm of a well-known social set, and all very probably composed during the last thirteen years of Elizabeth's reign, should be considered four other plays written a couple of years later by the Scottish knight Sir William Alexander, afterward Earl of Stirling. Alexander's "Darius" (1603), "Crœsus" (1604), "The Alexandræan" (1605), and "Julius Cæsar" (1607) were in the last year collected under the title of "Monarchicke Tragedies." Classical after the special manner of the French Senecans in the employment of metre, chorus, and messenger, and frankly incapable of public representation, these plays are probably an echo from the northern half of Britain of the strain of aristocratic closet tragedy which Lady Pembroke had introduced and Daniel established at the southern court.

In the style of subjects treated a notable difference exists between the productions of the Franco-Latin school and the earlier imitative works of Sackville, Gascoigne, and Hughes. The taste for melodramatic horror is replaced by that interest in the romance of

history which is in general one of the most striking literary characteristics of the age. On this one side the affected work of the disciples of Garnier voices the same taste which attracted to classic themes the two greatest dramatists of the time, Shakespeare and Jonson. Of the eleven plays just mentioned, all except Greville's two original tragedies are based on ancient history and have for their acknowledged purpose the portrayal of actual figures and situations. Five deal with the great epoch of the Roman civil wars and present the mighty protagonists in that struggle: Julius Cæsar, Antony, and Cleopatra. Three others concern the life of Alexander the Great. The cult of grisly ancient myth, exploited by Seneca and his earlier English followers, is supplanted by the cult of Plutarch, everywhere the strongest classical force in later Elizabethan drama. Thus, while adhering with all tenacity to the strictest Latin rules of structure, the academic tragedy had come to range itself in the choice of subject matter side by side with the popular drama. The inevitable contrast was forever fatal to the weaker type. Daniel's "Cleopatra," a poetic but essentially unactable precursor of Shakespeare in the dramatization of Plutarch's "Antonius," suffered an eclipse which, though natural, was blacker and more permanent than the lyric merits of this very graceful piece deserved. Alexander's "Tragedy of Julius Cæsar," with its prologue spoken by Juno, its chorus after each act, and its substitution of the garrulous nuntius in lieu of stage action, fell still-born upon a world which for some seven years had been applauding a very different "Cæsar."

The close of Elizabeth's reign coincides roughly with the extinction of the academic type of classic English

tragedy. By this time the genuinely useful features of the Senecan method had long been accepted by writers for the popular stage and assimilated into an organism possessed of capabilities far beyond the range of the strict Senecans. From the end of the sixteenth century, classic influence in tragedy ceases to mean Seneca or the Horatian rules, and comes to mean Plutarch, — especially Plutarch's Lives in North's translation. The important "Latin" plays of James's reign, if one may call them so even loosely, are the two of Ben Jonson and the three of Shakespeare. Jonson has a scholar's respect for the old laws of dramatic form, but in practice he treats them with the independence of the creative artist. In "Catiline's Conspiracy," he infuses a flavor of Seneca by admitting Sylla's ghost and the chorus; but in this play no less than in "Sejanus," the one great object and effect is not antiquarian correctness, but the convincing presentation of character in action. Shakespeare, entirely regardless of classic rule or precedent, romanticizes ancient history as he had already romanticized the English Chronicles.

Thus far we have traced the course of Latin influence as it was exerted through the entire reign of Elizabeth upon a series of courtly and scholarly tragedies frankly artificial and remote from the line of popular development. The continued aloofness of these plays from general dramatic progress and their strict retention of the features of their Senecan model were conditioned, as has been said, upon the failure during the first twenty-five or thirty years of Elizabeth's reign of any true feeling for tragedy in the competing native drama. Yet at the close of the period indicated, between the years 1585 and 1590, there rose into sudden preëmi-

nence several species of popular national tragedy, which more than any other single force created the "Elizabethan" dramatic outburst, and made tragedy during the next monumental quarter century the most various, powerful, and expressive of all stage forms. It will be the function of the remainder of this chapter and of that which follows to discuss the occasion and nature of this emergence of popular tragedy, — the most eventful movement, probably, in the history of English literature.

Of the several causes prerequisite to the growth of English national tragedy, the most indispensable was the example of the Latin tragic model. This model never received from popular playwrights the unreasoning allegiance offered by the purely academic poets, but as the imitations of the latter and the general study of Seneca and Horace brought it into gradual familiarity during the tragic period of incubation (1560–1585) it exerted a strong influence both in moulding form and in shaping public taste. The denial to the English populace at the time of Elizabeth's accession of a proper feeling for tragedy does not, of course, infer absence of interest in the dramatization of serious stories. On the contrary, we have pointed out in the transitional interludes of that period the constant search for new plot material, usually in the provinces of sober history and fable. However, the one desire of the public to which this species of drama catered was realistic excitement, and there was as yet no conception that such a demand could be satisfied by the steady development of a tragic theme to a tragic conclusion. Pure Senecan tragedy, illustrated somewhat fitfully among the

learned classes by plays like "Ferrex and Porrex," "Gismond of Salern," and "The Misfortunes of Arthur," was necessarily caviare to the general, lacking as it did the fundamental desideratum of stage action. No appreciation of the laws of dramatic technique or of the difference between comedy and tragedy appears in the contemporary productions of the popular stage. Such are "King Darius" (1565), R. B.'s "Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia" (1563?), J. Pikering's "Interlude of Vice Concerning Horestes" (1567), John Phillip's "Commodye of pacient and meeke Grissill" (1565?), T. Preston's "Lamentable tragedy mixed full of pleasant mirth, conteyning the life of Cambises King of Percia" (1569–1570); and the medley which Elizabeth's Master of the Chapel Children produced in accordance with the public taste, "Damon and Pithias." Most of these plays have been discussed in connection with the transitional interlude, and it is to that type that they all really belong. They make no division into acts or scenes, no attempt at consecutive plot development, and show no knowledge of the rules of modern dramatic art. The authors of these pieces were concerned, not to supplant the old moral drama, but merely to endue that outworn species with an adventitious appeal by the addition of classic or romantic story. In complete opposition to the practice of the imitators of Seneca, the bloodiest incidents in the narratives treated are selected for spectacular and sometimes unimaginable staging. Virginius is instructed by a stage direction to tie a handkerchief about his daughter's eyes and then strike off her head, which he immediately carries to Appius. Sisamnes is flayed on the stage "with a false skin," and in the same play ("Cam-

bises") Smirdis is provided with "a little bladder of vinegar," which when pricked at his murder may seem to exude blood.[1]

These luridly sensational scenes, however, seldom form the pith of the plays in which they occur. Very often they are no more than excrescent ornaments. Whatever genuine dramatic material there may be is taken in nearly every instance from the old comic convention of the interlude; and the entire failure of all the plays of the "Cambises" type is the inevitable result of the effort at fusing elements essentially discordant. The nearest approach to tragedy is found perhaps in the play which in title and subject matter promises least: Phillip's "Comedy of Patient Grissell." But here as elsewhere, though the title-rôles are given to serious or even tragic figures, it is the native buffoonery of the interlude that holds the centre of the stage. The real hero, before whom the awkward lay-figures of king and tyrant seem colorless, is everywhere the vice: Haphazard in "Appius and Virginia," Ambidexter in "Cambises," Politic Persuasion in "Patient Grissell." In the most advanced play of the class, "Damon and Pithias," — a work which on several sides shows kinship with the contemporary comedies, — the humorous element is of two kinds. Native clownage is represented by Grim the Collier and the two pages of Lylian type, Jack and Will: while in Carisophus, the parasite, is introduced a serio-comic figure from classical drama.

The attempt made half-heartedly by the authors of these plays to graft a plot of classic gravity upon the amorphous stock of the native interlude was naturally

[1] Cf. similar device in the Canterbury play of *Th. à Beckett*, Repts. Royal Comm. Hist. MSS. 9 I, 148 f, cited by Creizenach, iii, 496.

an artistic failure. Yet the works appealed notwithstanding to the broad public before which they were mostly performed, and they did much to foster a genuine, if for the present unreasoning, taste for tragic situation, intermingled with farce and romance. The "Cambises" vein persisted, and furnished Shakespeare with matter for unconscious imitation as well as laughter. True English tragedy arose from a compromise between native and classic influences, and it arose largely in answer to the popular demand created by plays of the "Cambises" type; but it was not discovered in the path which those dramas blazed. Successful tragedy, when it came, resulted, not from the effort to pack a sensational story upon the slender and ill-articulated frame of the interlude, but from the thorough adaptation of the more resourceful Latin model to national uses and traditions. Transitional interludes like "Cambises" prepared the public between 1560 and 1580 to appreciate the stage presentation of grave worldly issues, and national tragedy emerged when plays of the general Senecan mould began to be adapted to suit the expectations of the democratic public thus created.

One of the first popular English tragedies may well be "Locrine," though the revised version in which the play is preserved can hardly antedate 1591.[1] This drama, the obvious work of a scholar, is formed upon the general lines of the academic Senecan tragedy, but it is developed in harmony with the tastes of a democratic rather than a learned audience. The theme, like

[1] Because of certain clear borrowings from Spenser's *Complaints*, published 1591. But the extant edition (1595) distinctly states the play to be "Newly set foorth, overseene and corrected."

those of "Ferrex and Porrex" and "The Misfortunes of Arthur," is drawn from the mythical history of Britain, — a theme abounding in horror and bloodshed. Instead of the single ghost of "Thyestes," we have here two; and the favorite motives of Seneca — battle, murder, suicide, adultery, and domestic strife — are all repeated with the most lurid heightening. With the classicizing subject there goes no trace of the classical restraint: the utmost reaches of torment and atrocity are brought before the eyes of the spectators and exaggerated with every device of lyric declamation. The act and scene division of classic art is accompanied by a violation of the unities hardly less flagrant than that which Sidney fancifully portrays in his picture of the crudities of contemporary drama.[1] The action ranges wildly over the whole of Britain, and covers a full generation. From the courtly tragedies, the author of "Locrine" has inherited the dumb-show, while in conformity with the practice of popular drama he has introduced extended comic scenes, partly altogether anachronistic, partly cohering by only the slightest thread with the rest of the story. "Locrine" is neither an admirable nor even a reputable tragedy, but it shows more promise than any other which has been hitherto considered. It combines in its loose and tangled structure all the salient features of the native and the imported methods. It displays a healthy desire to present life frankly and freely, without exclusion either of comic or tragic incident, and in the way most impressive to the general spectator. It gives evidence of the availability of the materials of tragedy and indicates the existence of an untrained taste for tragic

[1] *Apologie for Poetrie*, 52.

entertainment. To make of it a tragedy in the true sense there was lacking only the selective and refining power of individual genius.

This genius appeared in Thomas Kyd, by all odds the greatest benefactor of Senecan tragedy in England. Kyd found tragic drama an undomesticated stray, on the one hand barely keeping up a precarious existence in the fashionable shows produced at court and college; on the other hand waging a blind and losing battle on the popular stage against the vigorous comic tradition of the time. Since the first production of "The Spanish Tragedy," about 1587, the English equivalent of Senecan melodrama has never lost its hold on vulgar audiences. This play is in many ways a much truer representative of Seneca than confessed imitations like "Ferrex and Porrex." Kyd's dramatic eye seized at once the strong point of the Senecan type, — its power of arousing horror and excitement. By abandoning altogether the conventional practice of indicating action at second hand through the mouths of messengers, and by supplanting the archaic mythological plot, which Norton and Hughes had endeavored vainly to resuscitate, by a modern theme of love and political intrigue, Kyd was enabled to approach the nearer to the actual spirit of Latin tragedy. The chorus, the ghost, and the spectacular peculiarities of Senecan plot remain; but they are vitalized by Kyd's manipulations till they reveal dramatic powers far beyond the vision of antiquarian reactionaries like Hughes, — far even beyond what Seneca himself perceived. The progeny of "The Spanish Tragedy" is infinite. "The Jew of Malta," "Titus Andronicus," and "Hamlet" are all, on one side, at least, its direct descendants; and what

each of these owes to Kyd's play is precisely what the latter had derived from the judicious imitation of Seneca.

The "Tragedy of Blood," thus inaugurated by Kyd, depends for success upon the presentation of sensational action in the development of a more or less consecutive plot. To this sensational interest — the characteristic feature of melodrama — all ethical and psychological aims are subordinated. The promise made by Revenge at the beginning of "The Spanish Tragedy" to the ghost of Andrea, —

> "Thou shalt see the author of thy death,
> Don Balthazar, the Prince of Portingale,
> Depriu'd of life by Bel-imperia," —

is recalled to the memory of the spectators at the end of each act; and it is the prosecution of this action, together with the parallel vengeance of Hieronimo for Horatio's murder, that furnishes the play with purpose and continuous interest through its four otherwise wandering acts. Moral import is entirely without the scope of this type of drama; there is no thought of picturing the avengers as more amiable or more noble-minded than their victims. The tone of the play is frankly that of the vendetta, and the author accepts savage conditions as he finds them without essaying any interpretation of life's problems.

Nor does "The Spanish Tragedy" seriously attempt the portrayal of individual character. With two exceptions, the delineation of the figures is not only crude, but obviously careless and perfunctory, — the work of a man absorbed entirely in action and devoid of sympathy with the actors. Two characters in the play

have, however, received Kyd's attention and possess distinctive traits, because in each case their portrayal offered opportunity for melodramatic effect. The treatment of Hieronimo's madness, glaringly unnatural as it is, made excellent stage business, and impressed itself ineradicably upon the contemporary public, furnishing the sub-title of the play in later printed editions,[1] and the subject of the extensive interpolations ascribed to the pen of Jonson. The exploitation of insanity became, indeed, one of the marked features of Kydian tragedy, even outvaluing as a theatrical asset the inherited Senecan ghost.

In his portrayal of Lorenzo, Kyd manifests again an apparent interest in character, founded not upon psychological discernment, but upon his recognition of the spectacular possibilities of the type. Lorenzo is the first of a long line of Machiavellian villains, whose popularity with a sensation-loving public was in no degree impaired by the palpable improbabilities and limitations in their presentment. He is the original progenitor of the villain of modern melodrama. In contrast with the great tragic heroes of Shakespeare, the species lost prestige; but when first introduced upon the stage, there was a zest hitherto inspired by no dramatic figure about this ardent devotee of policy who could "smile and smile and be a villain," — who, utterly soulless and heartless, could composedly intrigue out of his way the innocent obstacles to his ends, and, if necessary, could meet his own fate with a like egotistical composure. This is, of course, a low ideal of tragic character, born of the primitive philosophy that makes *sang-froid* and

[1] In the 1615 (seventh) and subsequent editions, the title runs, "The Spanish Tragedie: *Or, Hieronimo is mad againe.*"

remorseless efficiency the justification of all guile; but its rich potentialities for thrilling action gave it on the untutored tragic stage an irresistible vogue. Its influence was strong enough to cause Marlowe, who knew well a higher form of tragedy, to sacrifice the great psychological and poetic opportunity of his "Jew of Malta"; and in the figure of Young Mortimer it again introduced a coarse thread into the delicate characterization of the same author's "Edward II." It was one of the determining factors that moulded the youthful work of Shakespeare, inspiring his Aaron in "Titus Andronicus," his Richard III, and Margaret of Anjou, and coloring deeply his whole idea of tragic character, till Marlowe's example and the experience of life taught him a purer art. Traces of the same conception of the hero-villain show themselves in "Hamlet," probably as a heritage from Kyd rather than from Shakespeare; and the type continues unchanged in the main characters of Chettle's "Hoffman," of Barnes's "Devil's Charter," of "Lust's Dominion," and "Alphonsus of Germany."

Lorenzo indicates his character and that of the species to which he belongs in the words of his soliloquy concerning his servant-accomplices, Pedringano and Serberine (III, iii, 111–119): —

> "As for my selfe, I know my secret fault,
> And so doe they; but I have dealt for them.
> They that for coine their soules endangered,
> To saue my life, for coyne shall venture theirs:
> And better its that base companions dye,
> Then by their life to hazard our good haps.
> Nor shall they liue, for me to feare their faith:
> Ile trust my selfe, my selfe shall be my friend;
> For dye they shall, slaues are ordeined to no other end."

The source of this crude conception of life and character, which Kyd made one of the assets of cheap tragedy, is to be found in the contemporary attitude toward the works of Machiavelli, one of the most talked of writers of the age, and a particularly well-known figure on the stage.[1] It has been shown that the tenets of the Italian policist were most familiar in the exaggerated form in which they were represented by a French opponent, Innocent Gentillet. Gentillet's work, which by attacking the Satanic shrewdness and egotism of Machiavelli's doctrine, gave an enormous notoriety to the philosophy of the latter, was translated by Simon Patericke as early as 1577, and several times published under the title: "A discourse upon the Meanes of Well Governing and Maintaining in good Peace, a Kingdom, or other Principality — Against Nicholas Machiavell the Florentine." A passage from Patericke's Epistle Dedicatory will indicate the conception of Machiavellianism which this work disseminated: "For then Sathan being a disguised person amongst the French, in the likenesse of a merry ieaster [*i. e.*, Rabelais] acted a Comœdie, but shortly ensued a wofull Tragedie. When our countriemens minds were sick, and corrupted with these pestilent diseases, and that discipline waxed stale; then came forth the books of Machiavell, a most pernicious writer, which began not in secret and stealing manner (as did those former vices) but by open meanes, and as it were a continuall assault, utterly destroyed, not this or that vertue, but even all vertues at once: Insomuch as it tooke Faith from the princes; authoritie and maiestie from lawes;

[1] See the valuable dissertation of Edward Meyer, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama," *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, I.

libertie from the people, and peace and concord from all persons." The frank diabolism here attributed to the Florentine provided Kyd with an effective ready-made character for his intriguing prince, Lorenzo; and, in consequence of Kyd's successful employment, created a permanent stage type which long retained its popularity in the face of all efforts at psychological truth.

"The Spanish Tragedy" virtually created a great deal of Elizabethan stage business. Depending altogether upon spectacular effect, in entire indifference to moral purpose and truth of characterization, Kyd raised tragedy at a single bound to a position decidedly higher in vulgar favor than that occupied by the previously dominant comedy. "The Spanish Tragedy" received and merited more both of popularity and of derision than any other play, probably, which the sixteenth century produced; and it was everywhere imitated. Besides his clever adaptation of Senecan convention to the taste of his time, and his creation of the stock types already referred to, Kyd inaugurated in this play a greater variety of plot devices which persisted in the later drama than can easily be enumerated. The idyllic garden scene between Horatio and Bel-Imperia, setting off the tragedy that environs it; the play within the play of the last act; the employment of the dumb-show, no longer as a mere prelude, but as an integral part of the drama;[1] the dialogue of Andrea and Revenge, encompassing and interpreting the entire course of events; the carefully articulated sub-plot of Serberine and Pedringano, filling out and relieving with its grim humor the bleak horror of the

[1] Cf. III, xv, 28 ff and *Macbeth*, IV, i.

main tragedy: each of these elements — the result of Kyd's quick sense of striking effect — passed into the common stock of the theatre, and repeated itself in numerous variations in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

The enormous success of "The Spanish Tragedy" inspired two other plays, which courted popularity by a treatment of the same themes. "The First Part of Jeronimo, With the Warre of Portugall, and the life and death of Don Andræa" (1605) is a crude sketch of the antecedent history of the Spanish and Portuguese courts. The general appearance of plagiarism about this piece and the many contradictions in the presentation of the main figures of the two plays show "Jeronimo" to be almost certainly the effort of a theatrical hack to deck himself in borrowed glory.

"The Tragedy of Solyman and Perseda" (1592 ?), though published anonymously, and lacking decisive evidence of authorship, is now more generally accepted as Kyd's. It is an amplification into a five-act tragedy of the same story[1] which had previously furnished the material for Hieronimo's interpolated play; and it possesses considerable interest as showing how the innovations of "The Spanish Tragedy" fared in later practice. "Soliman and Perseda" is a work of greater polish and much less originality than the earlier play, but it shows the same general characteristics. It is not at all surprising that Kyd should have exhausted his imagination in the prodigality of intrigue and incident which mark his first play. The later effort has

[1] This story seems to have reached Kyd in Henry Wotton's *Courtly Controversy of Cupid's Cautels* (1578), a collection of five tales translated from the French of Jacques Yver.

little of the uncouth energy of language and action which made "The Spanish Tragedy" ridiculous to critics, but enormously influential. None of the serious characters in "Soliman and Perseda" possesses the interest which attaches to Hieronimo and Lorenzo; yet the later play is obviously better balanced and maturer. Equally with the other it depends for its appeal upon the portrayal of physical action of a bloody and surprising nature; and its plot, though neatly worked out, is even more entirely a narrative of consecutive events, closely following its novelistic source, and lacking the unity which the figures of Andrea and Revenge give to "The Spanish Tragedy." The main superiority of "Soliman and Perseda" lies in the comic scenes, where the humors of Piston and Basilisco, though quite conventional, are well handled; and in an increased sanity throughout. By most rules, "Soliman and Perseda" should be a better play than its predecessor; but, in fact, it has hardly a tithe of the interest of "The Spanish Tragedy," either for the critic or the reader. It is an instructive failure, marking clearly the superficiality and insipidity which were inherent in the melodrama, but which the very fault of "The Spanish Tragedy" — its violent excess — served largely to disguise. Along the path which Kyd had outlined, no true advance in tragedy was possible. His first play, struck out wildly in the flush of invention, remained the best of its type; and in spite of its immense vogue and the enormous gain in dramatic technique which it accomplished, it proved to its closest imitators a very misleading guide.

The reason for this is simple. Kyd brought within the range of tragedy all the forces by which an audi-

ence might be moved, except only the portrayal of human character. That he entirely ignored. In consequence, the plays of Kyd's type betray their lack of this fundamental requisite of all healthy drama only the more clearly in proportion as they grow saner in other respects. The tragic form which Kyd, with genius almost creative, had evolved from the Senecan tradition was for the present little more than an empty shell. In the case of "The Spanish Tragedy," the author tempered the barren coldness of his imaginary world by the artificial heat of lurid incident; but the human warmth which he did not find in Seneca he was not able to impart. It was only after Marlowe had breathed into tragedy the vital spirit of psychological truth that the English theatre was prepared to develop effectively the technical form which Kyd had invented.

The most immediate inheritors of the wealth of Senecan melodrama brought into currency by "The Spanish Tragedy" were the "Ur-Hamlet" and "Titus Andronicus," plays which abundantly shared with the older work both in the plaudits of the groundlings and in the derision of more refined tastes. The early "Hamlet" — unfortunately no longer extant in its original form — seems to have been written by Kyd himself about 1589. Even in the two greatly humanized and intellectualized versions of Shakespeare the parallelism with "The Spanish Tragedy" is continually forced upon the reader in the typically Kydian theme of all engulfing revenge, and in the spectacular use of the ghost, the play within the play, and the manifold variations of heroic insanity. Here also, as in "The Spanish Tragedy" and nearly all the plays of its class, the mark of Seneca's over-reflective style stands conspicu-

ous in the *penchant* for extended soliloquy and self-analysis.

"Titus Andronicus" is another drama in which the morbid craze for vengeance is traced through an orgy of undiscriminating slaughter. First printed in 1594, the tragedy is stated to have been played sundry times by the companies of the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Derby (later the Lord Chamberlain's), and the Earl of Sussex. This advertisement links "Titus Andronicus" with the second and third parts of "Henry VI," which were likewise acted both by the Earl of Pembroke's Men and by those of the Strange-Derby-Chamberlain Company.[1] Thus, it seems likely that Shakespeare began his career as a tragic writer in "Titus Andronicus" precisely in the manner in which he began his concern with the history play: as the reviser, that is, for his company's use of a striking but inartistic drama that had already attained notoriety upon a different stage.

The peculiar strength and weakness of Senecan melodrama are well illustrated, perhaps, by the coincidence that four of the most conspicuous examples of the type, all belonging to the period 1590–1603, found their way into print only a generation or more after composition. That they should have remained extant for so long in theatrical archives, and at the end of that period have been still found worthy of revision and publication, shows the permanent hold which they

[1] The 1595 edition of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, the earliest version of Henry VI, Pt. III, declares that play to have been acted by Lord Pembroke's Men, and the close connection of the *True Tragedy* with the earlier *First Part of the Contention* makes it certain that the two dramas belonged to the same company.

had upon vulgar fancy. On the other hand, the publishers' previous neglect of plays so certainly notorious on the stage may not unjustly be ascribed to their obvious lack of psychological truth and literary polish.

Of these four melodramas, "The Jew of Malta," Marlowe's only accepted production in the species, was written about 1590, and acted with extraordinary success by Henslowe's Company between 1592 and 1596. Though licensed for publication in 1594, no edition is known prior to 1633, when the tragedy was printed after having been revived both at the Cockpit Theatre and at Court. "Lust's Dominion, or The Lascivious Queen," was first published in 1657 as "A Tragedie Written by Christopher Marlowe, Gent." In its lurid picture of vice in high places, and in the portraiture of its hero-villain Eleazar, the Machiavellian Moor, this play is a companion-piece to "Titus Andronicus," by which it was probably suggested. The ascription to Marlowe seems to be unsupported by any evidence, and probably originated with the untrustworthy publisher of the 1657 edition, Francis Kirkman. Collier identified "Lust's Dominion" with "The Spanish Moor's Tragedy" by Dekker, Haughton, and Day, mentioned in Henslowe's Diary for January, 1600, but it seems probable that the former piece took its first form a decade earlier.

The very interesting melodrama "Alphonsus of Germany," published 1654, appears, like the plays just mentioned, to date from a period little subsequent to 1590. Throughout this drama Machiavellianism is rampant in the schemes and character of the titular hero; and the old theme of revenge for a father presents itself anew in Alphonsus's dupe and fool, Alexander de

Cyprus, together with many subordinate horrors and much carefully constructed machinery of plot and subplot.

Chettle's "Hoffman," mentioned by Henslowe in 1602, is the fourth of these wild stage plays, which were destined to wait long for publication. It exists only in a text printed in 1631. Together with Marston's contemporary "History of Antonio and Mellida," in two parts, and the Shakespearean "Hamlet," it makes up a group illustrative of the vogue of the Senecan revenge play at the very close of the Tudor period. "Hamlet" is the link which binds this series to the earlier group of plays immediately inspired by "The Spanish Tragedy." "Hamlet" is, furthermore, the only connecting medium between this entire brutal species and the permanent interests of art and humanity.

Senecan melodrama did not end with the reign of Elizabeth. Perhaps it has never met a complete check. But in the plays which follow "Hamlet," the significance of the classic connection disappears, and a different moral tone is perceived. Traces of the old spirit remain in "The Devil's Charter" by Barnabe Barnes (1607), a fetid story of Borgian crime and trickery, which hardly justifies the suggestion of supernatural agencies conveyed in the title; and in Chapman's "Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois" (1610). In general, however, the transition from what is, at worst, the honest bestiality of "The Spanish Tragedy" and "Titus Andronicus" to the insidious pessimism of Jacobean revenge plays like "The Revenger's Tragedy" of Tourneur (1607) arises from an opposition in taste that is fundamental and irreconcilable.

Even the Elizabethan popular expressions of the

Senecan influence, though exhaling a far less poisonous atmosphere than the terrible murder tragedies of Webster and Tourneur, make woefully unexhilarating reading. They leave the student parched for a breath of imaginative sympathy or ideal nobility. Only in a single play from the Senecan tradition does one find that flavor of romance and human sweetness which raises melodrama above sordidness. Naturally enough, it is in the tragedy of Shakespeare that stands intermediate in date between his slight retouching of the ghastly "Titus Andronicus" and his masterly transformation of the almost equally ghastly old "Hamlet" into an imaginative tragedy of quite different character. In the impression which it leaves upon the reader "Romeo and Juliet" is far removed from any of the plays we have discussed, but fundamentally it belongs to the progeny of Senecan tragedy. The root idea of family feud, hardly less bitter than in the "Thebais" or "Titus Andronicus"; the violent nature of the action and tremendous effusion of blood, involving not only the immediate protagonists, but also such guiltless non-partisans as Mercutio and the County Paris, relate the play organically to the "Spanish Tragedy" class. And the same relationship appears in the handling of the plot: in the elevation of passion above character, and in the neglect of reason and ordered argument in the pursuit of lyric declamation. Of course, the pure beauty of the main story, beside which even the love scenes between Horatio and Bel-Imperia seem gross and shallow, owes nothing to Seneca. So, it is an original reform of Shakespeare to contradict the diabolism toward which the species often tended, and out of evil still to find means of good, showing how the

"star-crossed lovers . . . Do with their death bury their parents' strife," and how the final result of all the tempest of passion is the reëstablishment of amity and order. It is by reading "Romeo and Juliet" that one takes most pleasing leave of the classic-born tragedy of blood. This play shows little, to be sure, of the Marlovian soul-study which was already broadening and ennobling tragedy. Yet it is pervaded by a spirit equally rare, and it suggests that the key to the portal which leads from melodrama to true human tragedy lay perhaps not solely in the hands of Marlowe.

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II. ACADEMIC AND AMATEUR TRAGEDIES SHOWING SENECAN INFLUENCE

A. ACADEMIC TRAGEDIES DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY SENECA

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(*b*) "The Tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex, set forth without addition or alteration but altogether as the same was shewed on stage before the Queenes Maiestie, about nine yeares past, vz. the xviij. day of Ianuarie. 1561.

by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple." n. d. (ca. 1570) Facsimile, Farmer, 1908. *Reprinted, Dodsley*, all edd. except Hazlitt's; T. Hawkins, *Origin of the English Drama*, ii, 1773; *Ancient British Drama*, i, 1810; W. D. Cooper, *Shakespeare Society*, xxxvi, 1847 (with *Ralph Roister Doister*); R. W. Sackville-West, *The Works of Thomas Sackville*, 1859; L. T. Smith, *Engl. Sprach- u. Litteraturdenkmale*, i, 1883; Manly, *Specimens*, ii, 1897; J. S. Farmer, *Dram. Writings of Edwards, Norton, Sackville*, 1906.

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CHAPTER VII

THE HEROIC PLAY

It is necessary to look far into the past in order to trace the ultimate source of the dramatic current which during the last fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign blended with the influences already considered, and preserved tragedy from barren sensationalism by teaching it the value of the individual personality. Coeval with the beginnings and earliest development of the regular stage under religious auspices, there had existed an entirely popular species of quasi-dramatic entertainment, much less definite in form and less rich in evolutionary possibilities, but even more firmly ingrained in the life of the nation, and deep rooted in hoariest antiquity. This incipient communal drama found expression through such questionable media as the village dance, the choral song, and the ballad, but retained its dramatic germ tenaciously from the pagan sword dance to the latest degenerate survivals in seventeenth and eighteenth century hamlets. Most commonly it dealt with the celebration of heroic qualities and lauded individual prowess, sometimes that of mythical warrior-deities, sometimes of historical or semi-historical characters like Percy and Douglas, Robin Hood or Sir Gawain.

The fifteenth century, the period of the highest development and broadest diffusion of the religious drama, evolved concurrently, as its other most characteristic literary product, the great volume of ballad

poetry, which treated, for the most part, the popular figures of legend or romance in a form always verging upon the dramatic. Certain extant fragments of the time even show the particular ballad hero, Robin Hood, to have been the subject of real plays which depicted his character and feats in a manner identical at all points with that of the ballads.[1] All this literature implies the existence among the common people of England at the beginning of the Tudor period of a strong interest in the crudest form of character portrayal; that is, in the delineation of a well-known figure in the performance of deeds too simple and familiar to distract the attention by reason of either novelty or intricate plot manipulation. This interest continued unabated among the vulgar, in spite of the gibes and attacks of more progressive critics, till after the reign of James I; and its vitality is attested, not only by the numerous hostile allusions, but by the stupendous output of low-priced chapbooks and ballads recording the adventures of popular figures like Guy of Warwick, Valentine and Orson, and the Arthurian heroes.

The general craving thus indicated was mainly satisfied during the ascendancy of the religious play and the interlude by means of verse and prose narrative rather than the drama; but it was largely a dramatic instinct, and in the end it affected the stage both for good and ill. Undoubtedly, it was this taste, implanted in the body of the people, which kept alive the desire for serious popular drama during the long

[1] Two such works are reprinted in *Manly's Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama*, vol. i, 279 ff, and in the *Malone Society* "Collections," part ii (1908), 117 ff.

reign of almost unmixed farce, and it was the same taste which refused to be satisfied with the imported Senecan tragedy of plot intrigue alone, and restricted Senecan imitation for some thirty years to the learned amateur stage. On the one hand, this state of literary interest did much to raise Elizabethan drama superior to the petty cult of novelty and to give it one of its clearest lines of contact with Athenian tragedy in its sane presentation of great characters and events, untrammelled by the shame of plagiarism or triteness. The same influence operated disadvantageously, however, in encouraging a very cavalier attitude among the popular dramatists towards the virtues of unity and formal regularity in plot construction. It gave an epic tinge to much of the drama of the day, impelling the writers to cut their material lineally rather than transversely, and thus substitute for the full and balanced treatment of the story's climax a rambling episodic chronicle of incidents. It tended normally to promote the glorification of the central figure and the neglect of all others.

The general appetite for narratives of popular heroes, to which the ballads of the fifteenth century largely ministered, was further fed at the close of that period by adapting to the vulgar taste the romance of chivalry, once an essentially aristocratic species of literature, now fallen somewhat into disrepute. The great period of chivalrous romance came to a long deferred end with Malory, who summed up in prose what had centuries before been written in verse and said what should perhaps have been the last word upon the Arthurian story. The success of the "Morte d'Arthur," however, called forth numerous imitations,

and gave renewed life among the populace to a literary genre which as a courtly type had long arrived at senility. Among the host of works thus recalled into vogue, two deserve particular notice: "Huon of Bordeaux," rendered from the French by Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart, during the reign of Henry VIII, and the enormously famous "Amadis of Gaul," of which one Elizabethan version is the work of the dramatist Anthony Munday.[1]

This kind of fiction maintained itself by no freshness or skill in narrative, but merely by the portrayal in crude outline of some stupendous central figure. In the appreciation of critics whose taste was being chastened alike by the ideals of classical restraint and by Puritan morality, such vulgar stories steadily lost caste, till they came to be regarded as emblematic of all that was low and inartistic in literature.[2] Yet we have overwhelming evidence, not only for the undiminishing appeal of this style of narrative with the rude public to which it mainly catered, but also for the important fact that the rough dramatizations of such hero-stories formed during two thirds of Elizabeth's reign the chief source of popular serious drama. In a well-known passage of his "Schoolmaster," Roger Ascham records his hostility to the type of fiction represented by the "Morte d'Arthur" and the ballads as well as to the newer vogue of the Italian novel. The judgment of Gosson and Meres, both

[1] An earlier translation by T. Paynell had appeared in 1567.

[2] Note, for example, Ben Jonson's hit at "The Knight of the Sun" in *Cynthia's Revels* (III, iii), and at the "Arcadia" in *Bartholomew Fair* (IV, ii) and *Every Man Out of his Humor* (II, i).

classicists and Puritans, is to the same effect, and bears the same witness to the strength of the reprobated fashion. Writing in 1579, Gosson declares: "I may boldly say it because I have seen it, that 'The Palace of Pleasure,' 'The Golden Ass,' 'The Æthiopian History,' 'Amadis of France,' and 'The Round Table' . . . have been thoroughly raked to furnish the playhouses in London."

And Francis Meres, with equal emphasis on the moral side of the question, gives a catalogue of titles of the offending literature comparing interestingly with the great collection of similar works which the bourgeois Captain Cox of Coventry is known to have made. Meres writes in a section of his "Palladis Tamia" (1598) dealing with the "Reading of bookes": "As the Lord de la Nonne in the sixe discourse of his politike and military discourses censureth of the bookes of 'Amadis de Gaule,' wh. he saith are no lesse hurtfull to youth then the workes of Michiauell to age: so these bookes are accordingly to be censured of, whose names follow: 'Beuis of Hampton,' 'Guy of Warwicke,' 'Arthur of the Round Table,' 'Huon of Bordeaux,' 'Oliuer of the Castle,' 'The Foure Sonnes of Aymon,' 'Gargantua,' 'Gireleon,' 'The Honour of Chiualrie,' 'Primaleon of Greece,' 'Palmerin de Oliua,' 'The 7. Champions,' 'The Myrror of Knighthood,' 'Blancherdine,' 'Meruin' [Merlin ?], 'Howleglasse' [Till Eulenspiegel], the stories of 'Palladyne' and 'Palmendos,' 'The Blacke Knight,' 'The Maiden Knight,' 'The History of Cælestina,' 'The Castle of Fame,' 'Gallian of France,' 'Ornatus and Artesia,' etc."

In his list of sources of contemporary popular drama quoted above, Gosson adds to the typical cycles of the

Round Table and Amadis and the not altogether dissimilar sentimental romance of the late Greek Heliodorus the collections of stories, often unedifying, in Apuleius's "Golden Ass," and Painter's "Palace of Pleasure." It was works like the first three of these which lent to Elizabethan drama many of the features to be considered in this chapter. The great bulk of English popular drama, prior to 1587, which was not farce, seems to have belonged to this pseudo-chivalrous convention; and the playwrights dealt the more freely with their material by reason of the decadence of the heroic romance as an art form. It would, of course, be absurd to suppose that the drama could learn any truth of human character from the ridiculous figures that strut through the vulgarized romances of the day. Yet this weak and dying species left to the plays formed out of it certain conventional types of personality, infinitely rude and coarse, which were freely incorporated and gave the resultant dramas their chief interest. They were little more than lay figures; but they held the eyes of the audiences, carried on the action, and declaimed the tremendous speeches, giving dramatists and people their first glimpse of tragic character, and creating the conditions which later made it possible for Marlowe to replace them by figures of flesh and blood. "Tamburlaine" is the classic instance of chivalrous romance turned drama, or rather "Tamburlaine" would be if we could detach its constituent machinery from the web of lyric passion in which the poet has enshrouded it. What Seneca was to Kyd, the heritage of romantic legend may be said to have been to Marlowe; and it chanced by the blessing of fate that each of these masters forged simul-

taneously from his little-promising material one of the two indispensables of tragedy: plot and character.

The vast majority of the plays roughly manufactured out of tales of knightly adventure during the first thirty years of Elizabeth's reign have certainly perished. Frankly artless as they were in form and ephemeral in purpose, it is surprising that any should have found their way into print, and the few that do survive doubtless owe that distinction to a degree of sophistication unusual to the general type.

The fairest example of the species is a work entitled "The Historie of the two valiant Knights, Syr Clyomon Knight of the Golden Sheeld, sonne to the King of Denmarke: And Clamydes the white Knight, sonne to the King of Suavia." This anonymous production, published in 1599, but probably a score of years older, was formerly ascribed very unreasonably to George Peele, and has been lately attributed on purely speculative grounds to Thomas Preston, the author of "Cambises."[1] Here, through the tedious length of one hundred and forty pages of hobbling rime, are presented, with the intricate formlessness characteristic of the later prose romance, the adventures of the two titular heroes in pursuit of love and honor. Their wanderings bear them through a strange world, ruled in chief by no less a monarch than King Alexander the Great,—a world which includes besides numerous widely distant realms an Isle of Strange Marshes and a Forest of Strange Marvels. In addition to the more usual actors of heroic romance, the reader meets a flying serpent that feeds on ladies fair; a crafty enchanter, Brian Sans-

[1] See G. L. Kittredge, "Notes on Elizabethan Plays," *Journal of Germanic Philology*, ii, 7 ff.

foy, who imprisons good knights in his tower and seeks by true fairy-tale methods to beguile Sir Clamydes of his love; and an oppressed princess wandering in page's attire. Only in the vice, Subtle Shift, who plays the part of squire to each of the knights in turn; in the humorous dialect of the old countryman, Corin; and perhaps in the descent of Providence *in propria persona* to prevent the heroine's suicide, is there any touch of ordinary dramatic convention.

Analogous in content and structure is another play of approximately the same date (*ca.* 1576): "An Excellent and Pleasant Comedie, termed after the name of the Vice, Common Conditions, drawne out of the most famous historie of Galiarbus Duke of Arabia, and of the good and eeuill successe of him and his two children, Sedmond his sun and Clarisia his daughter." The general form and predominant seven-foot couplet of "Clyomon and Clamides" appear equally in "Common Conditions," which, however, surpasses the other drama in its employment of conventional comic material, and shows in general a somewhat less total ignorance of the laws of theatrical composition. The adventures of the hero and heroine, seeking their exiled father through the wide world, are complicated by the persecutions of a marauding band of tinkers on land and a pirate crew by sea; but most of all by the petty knaveries of their page, Common Conditions, who creates much of the action by extricating the main characters from certain difficulties to plunge them mischievously into others. Like the usual vice of the interlude, and like his less developed counterpart, Subtle Shift in "Clyomon and Clamides," Common Conditions makes use of an *alias*, calling himself

upon occasion Master Affection; and when convicted of this deceit, he explains with some glibness that Affection is his "sure name," but Conditions his "kirson name." Abundant love interest is presented in the style popular with the readers of chivalrous romance. The heroine, married after a courtship more sensational than convincing, to the knight Lamphedon, suffers exile, captivity at the hands of pirates, separation from her husband, and a long sojourn in a foreign land, where as the Lady Metræa she withstands happily the embarrassment of courtship by her own brother, likewise disguised, and by the lord of the country. Meantime, Lamphedon, roaming over the world in search of the lost Clarisia, vanquishes pirate crews single-handed, and subdues in battle a notable imprisoner of ladies, Cardolus, the lord of Marofus Isle.

The wearisome complexity of "Clyomon and Clamides" and "Common Conditions" does much to obscure the crude character interest which appears in the early Robin Hood fragments, and which practically alone kept alive this kind of drama. Like the debased romances which inspired them, these plays sacrifice to the illegitimate ambition of heaping up surprises and sensations the one great merit of their type, — the power to paint in rough but striking outline a few elemental passions and experiences. The average early Elizabethan heroic play can hardly have possessed the confusing intricacy of character and situation found in the two overlabored specimens which the printers not unnaturally chose for publication. Yet even in these examples it is clear that the interest of spectators depended upon character rather than plot; that is, amid all the profusion of incident

the attention was not fixed on the answer to a problem of intrigue, but followed in dull wonder each of the main figures as each passed through a series of disconnected adventures.

In the way of real character these works had naturally little, if anything, to offer; and they must of necessity be supplanted as soon as mature tragedy began to hold up a mirror to actual life. Through a time of perilous uncertainty, however, they performed for the English theatre two great services, in maintaining serious story on a popular stage otherwise given over to farce, and in fixing the attention upon the individual dramatic personage. It is important to observe that in the plays under discussion comedy by no means chokes interest in the serious plot as it does in contemporary works of another style, like "Cambises" and "Damon and Pithias." In bustle and human appeal the figures of knights and ladies more than equal those of vice or clown, and the latter character, a survival from the interlude convention, is no longer an independent attraction, but takes an active part in the elaboration of the general plot. In such plays we find serious English drama making its first stand during the Tudor period against the otherwise overwhelming vogue of farce and buffoonery.

So, again, though the early chivalrous drama could not make its figures humanly convincing or psychologically true, it could make them interesting to the vulgar playgoer; and that was probably the most indispensable need of the moment. It kept the eyes of the spectators constantly fixed upon its rude men of straw, and these were in good time replaced by living figures. In this life-giving metamorphosis Marlowe

was the chief engineer; but before it could occur there was required a new and saner view of dramatic art. The advance in structure, which evidences the birth of the new art, came out of Seneca, when Seneca had at last been brought into harmony with the spirit of the age. Yet without the succession of crude heroic plays, it is doubtful whether Thomas Kyd would have found a public for his thaumaturgic "Spanish Tragedy." And if the public had not been there craving a drama that should deal with emotions deeper than the horse-play and mummery of the interlude, it is well-nigh certain that Kyd would never have condescended to nationalize classic art. Instead of "The Spanish Tragedy" and "Soliman and Perseda," he might well have produced a mere series of "Cornelias."

At the same time, probably in the very year (1587), in which Kyd settled the place of classic influence in the development of English tragedy, Marlowe took up the play of chivalry. He idealized it in "Tamburlaine," and gave it a poetic intensity so far in excess of anything it had previously known, that the contrast killed then and forever the original species. "Henslowe's Diary," indeed, gives evidence of the attempt of that illiterate manager to entertain his audiences during the decade beginning 1592 with plays presumably after the archaic pattern; plays presenting such heroes as Huon of Bordeaux, Godfrey of Boulogne, Chinon of England, King Arthur, Valentine and Orson, Randal, Earl of Chester, and the four sons of Aymon.[1] The total disappearance of all these works argues sufficiently the contempt they received from a public that had outgrown them. The few surviving

[1] See *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. W. W. Greg.

chivalrous plays of this period, which are not obvious derivatives from Marlowe, seem to have been written mostly for distinctly plebeian audiences, and in every case they blend the heroic strain with material of another kind. Weak medleys like "George-a-Greene," "Mucedorus," and "Fair Em" illustrate the last state of the undeveloped heroic play.[1]

Thomas Heywood's "Four Prentices of London," which the apologetic preface to the edition of 1615 asserts to have been in fashion "some fifteen or sixteen years ago," can certainly have laid claim at the period indicated to only a very vulgar and inartistic public. Ineffectual imitation of "Tamburlaine" is apparent in the valiant quarrelsomeness and Thrasonical military ardor of the heroes, of whom no fewer than six compete for the spectator's main attention. But the utter formlessness of the piece, which shows not even the most glimmering realization of the possibilities of scene division or the need of plot coherence, — together with the rank absurdity of the fable, — proves that it belongs in spirit to the pre-"Tamburlaine" epoch. The special appeal to the London apprentices, supported by the most ridiculous distortion of the story, adds concrete evidence for the natural assumption that this play, like the lost dramas of Henslowe's Company, was consciously produced in a cheap and obsolete style for the satisfaction of the most vulgar taste.

The attitude of progressive and educated opinion

[1] In each of these plays the heroical element appears to form the groundwork of the plot; but in each case this fundamental material is neglected or distorted in the development of the kind of interest proper to the more fashionable romantic comedy.

toward the old play of chivalrous romance during the last ten years of the sixteenth century is expressed in the exquisite satire of the type in Peele's "Old Wives' Tale"; while in Beaumont's later "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (1609 ?) — supposed to be directed in particular against "The Four Prentices of London" — the ridicule is yet sharper, and the restriction of the offending species to the bourgeois public is clearly emphasized. The Induction to Beaumont's play contains a very complete list of the favorite dramatic entertainments of the contemporary London rabble.

In "The Four Prentices of London" there remains hardly anything of the stress upon the individual figure which gave the heroic drama its original significance. Still less of the old character appears in two other late members of the species which owe nothing to the example of Marlowe. One of these plays, first printed from a British Museum manuscript in 1884 by Mr. Bullen, under the title of "The Distracted Emperor" deals in excessively sensational fashion with a morbid perversion of the story of Charlemagne, Orlando, and Ganelon. The other — entitled "The History of the Trial of Chivalry," and published in 1605 as lately acted by the Earl of Derby's Company — is an elaborate composite of knightly and romantic adventure constructed about an apocryphal theme of rivalry between Lewis King of France and the King of Navarre. In such works heroic drama reaches an ebb as low as that to which heroic romance had been brought in its most decadent popularized representations. The individual figure loses every charm, and the consequent impoverishment in human interest is meanly compensated by the multiplication of unimpressive stock

characters and the interpolation of extraneous plot devices.[1]

Christopher Marlowe brought to the composition of "Tamburlaine" (1587–1588) the full classical training of a Cambridge Master of Arts, and not improbably also the experience derived from the previous dramatization of the Latin story of Dido. This preparation lent to his essay at chivalrous drama a certain invaluable sense of form, which shows itself, for example, in the poet's ordering his material in acts and scenes; and a Vergilian delicacy of finish which made the blank verse of "Tamburlaine" illumine the dark ways of dramatic style with veritable light from above. In the essentials, however, of plot and character, Marlowe followed native usage alone. Of tragedy in the proper sense the heroic drama had no idea; nor did either part of "Tamburlaine" show any clear conception of that wise economy of tragic material which rejects all irrelevant horrors and so manages the rest as to heighten the climactic interest of the close. There is here no culmination of suspense as the play approaches the inevitable solution of a great central problem. Rather, we follow the progress of the mighty conqueror through a succession of breathless glories, till arbitrarily the excitement drops, and the play ends on the lowered key of peaceful marriage or triumphant death.

Like the compilers of the romances of "Amadis" and "Sir Huon," Marlowe starts with the purpose of

[1] Plays of this type doubtless stimulated the taste for purposeless martial scenes like those in *All 's Well that Ends Well.* A good illustration is *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall,* which, though not a heroic play, resembles *The Trial of Chivalry* in its presentation of fictitious French history.

displaying the grandeur of his hero through a sequence of independent adventures; and having commenced near the point of incredibility, flags his invention in the effort to cap each past marvel by the next. The violent crudities of both parts of "Tamburlaine," in speech and action, arise not so much from inherent want of taste, as from the desperate need of maintaining the naturally lessening interest of the piece. The enforced self-murder of Agidas; the vulgarity of the word combat between Zenocrate and Zabina; and the shocking barbarity of the scenes which depict the imprisonment of Bajazet and his contributory kings, and the cold-blooded slaughter of the virgins of Damascus, the governor of Babylon, and Tamburlaine's own son are all blemishes produced by the attempt to make effective on the stage an essentially narrative presentation of the triumphant warrior. In the general atmosphere of the scenes, the romantic picture of the relations between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, and the conception of the various subsidiary kings and governors, Marlowe follows the conventional usage of chivalrous romance; and in making the great central figure common to all such literature at the same time the exponent of his own personal rage for ideal grandeur, he created the first great psychological character in English tragedy and exorcised a fervent living spirit to inform the promising dramatic frame which the English Senecans had devised. Tragic drama in England was consummated in the blending of classical and native influences, in the union of form and spirit. It is probably no chance phenomenon that "Hamlet," the most typical of English tragedies, is the one in which we can see most clearly how the rich plot outline of the "tragedy of blood" has

been overlaid and spiritualized by that deep study of a human soul first attempted in the plays of Marlowe.

In the study of the two parts of "Tamburlaine," the critic's interest in actual achievement transcends for the first time that suggested by evolutionary potentialities. Crude as these plays are on the side of form, they yet embody certain stable peculiarities in their relation to life and art which we are accustomed to regard as special characteristics of the best Elizabethan drama. They mark the approach to the great dramatic watershed which separates early Elizabethan crudity from Jacobean and Caroline sterility. To be sure, the individual heights stand far above them in the masterpieces of Shakespeare and Jonson, but the continued rise of the general dramatic level can no longer be safely presupposed.

The wide-spread imitation of the "Tamburlaine" plays was inevitable. They implanted the great desideratum of theatrical success — striking psychologic effect — in a type of literature long beloved not only on the popular stage, but also in the narrative fiction of the time. That nearly all these imitations proved total failures was perfectly natural. "Tamburlaine" was even less susceptible of uninspired copying than "The Spanish Tragedy"; to an even greater extent were its excesses of speech and action part of its very nature. The bombast and violence of Marlowe's play were transmuted into legitimate dramatic material by the fervency with which the poet expressed his own high aspiring soul in the terms of world-conquest and warlike ruthlessness. Reproduced by any less translunary pen, these extravagances showed themselves for the intrinsic rubbish that they were; pruned away, they left

not even the plot outline upon which the pedestrian imitators of Kyd were able to rest their helplessness.

In the "Comicall Historie of Alphonsus, King of Arragon," Robert Greene, one of the most active promoters of dramatic innovation, has attempted with disastrous result to emulate the success of "Tamburlaine." Diction, character, and incident are reproduced brazenly in a medley of the most perfect insipidity. Apparently conscious of his inability to hold the attention by the mere slavish following of Marlowe's example, Greene has added several extraneous adornments which bring out the more glaringly the heavy lifelessness of his play. In accordance with an undramatic convention fashionable at the time and exemplified in "Soliman and Perseda," the deeds of Alphonsus are framed within an elaborate mythological masque of Venus and the Muses. Many speeches are deprived of force by studied imitations of the Euphuistic style, — such as allusions to the curious herb which enables the severed snake to join together its "battered corpse"; to the Asbeston stone, "Which, if it once be heat in flames of fire, Denieth to becommen colde againe"; and to the fabled Echinus; while the wife and daughter of the Turkish Emperor are frankly presented as warring Amazons. The listlessness of the portrayal of Alphonsus's continual victories is relieved, in a manner eagerly followed by later writers of dull plays, by interpolated exhibitions of magic. Medea conjures up Calchas, dressed surprisingly "in a white surplise and a Cardinals Myter," at the court of Amurack; and Mahomet prophesies through a brazen head to the Turkish princes.

In the next two plays of Greene — "The Look-

ing Glass for London," written in conjunction with Thomas Lodge, and "Orlando Furioso"—the influence of "Tamburlaine" is likewise conspicuous. The ranting blasphemy of Rasni, King of Nineveh, and the magniloquent speeches of Orlando, with the picture of the servile bands of kings that attend on each, are clearly copied from Marlowe; but neither the introduction of spectacular stage business and a number of tolerable comic scenes in the former play, nor the borrowing of the Kydian theme of heroic insanity in the latter saves them from the inevitable failure incident to the disparity between the grandeur of the stolen shreds and patches of language and the psychological poverty of the speakers. Greene had a great work to do in English comedy; but his attempts at straining the delicate pastoral note with which nature had alone endowed him into a semblance of Marlowe's passionate soul-expression served only to show how unique was at this time the tragical gift of the latter poet.

One of the most readable of the humbler imitations of "Tamburlaine" is an anonymous play acted by the Children of the Queen's Chapel and preserved in a very carelessly printed edition, dated 1594. This work, entitled "The Warres of Cyrus King of Persia against Antiochus King of Assyria, with the Tragicall ende of Panthæa," derives its plot from the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon, of which a complete translation had appeared as early as 1567. The Marlovian influence is everywhere evident: in the versification; in the general treatment of the grandiose theme of conflicting Asiatic empires, each with its host of tributary kings and chieftains; and in the high romantic development given to the interests both of love and war. It would seem

that reminiscence of the second part of "Tamburlaine" was particularly strong in the mind of the author. The treatment of the Panthæa-Araspas-Abradatas love episode — the only one of the several independent stories which reaches a dramatic conclusion — is pretty clearly indebted to the Olympia-Theridamas scenes in "Tamburlaine II." Moreover, in the management of the figure of Cyrus, the titular hero, the play shows a decided change from the procedure of the first part of "Tamburlaine" and the immediate imitations of that work. The latter plays concentrate attention wholly upon the chief personage, whose rise they portray from humble beginnings to the attainment of unexampled magnificence. Cyrus, however, in the drama under discussion, occupies a position much more like that of Tamburlaine in Marlowe's second play. He is the undisputed conqueror, who has reached the zenith of his glory, and who reigns secure through the entire progress of the action. Consequently, the dramatic interest, instead of following the single career of the ruling genius of the world portrayed, divides itself among the different minor figures upon which the hero's brilliance has cast reflected splendor. In the second part of "Tamburlaine," to be sure, though many scenes deal with the independent adventures of Sigismond and Orcanes, Callepine, Theridamas and Techelles, the personality of Tamburlaine himself is always kept clearly in view, and the apparently scattered threads of narrative all lead up to the final glorification of the world-conqueror in the last act. The author of "The Warres of Cyrus" has been able to endow his hero with no such all-pervasive significance, and his play consequently lacks unity of impression as well

as unity of structure. The very exaltation of Cyrus's character to a height of vague nobility where he shows himself superior to the human passions of love, hatred, envy, and almost even of ambition, makes this figure necessarily pale and bloodless. Indeed, he finds a truer counterpart in the amiably insipid hero of Rowe's "Tamerlane" than in the infinitely more sympathetic, though faultier Tamburlaine of Marlowe.

In "Doctor Faustus" Marlowe first took up a strictly tragic theme. The main idea is again that of infinite aspiration expressed in a single colossal figure. In the case of this play, however, the hero's ambition to sway "All things that moue betweene the quiet poles" takes a direction which, instead of leading him through a succession of individual triumphs, brings him immediately into conflict with the fundamental moral laws, and broaches an issue soluble only in the terrific final scene. In this play, the special feature of the heroic drama, the treatment of a central hero who dares and does to the uttermost, has attained its greatest imaginable development. It testifies strongly to the inherent appeal of this conception that "Doctor Faustus," though grossly violating the rules of dramatic structure and greatly qualifying its effectiveness by the interpolation of comic scenes of unutterable bathos, was yet on the Elizabethan stage, and remains, even when presented on that of to-day, one of the most successful tragedies which the age produced.

The opportunity for the pure heroic play, in which the entire interest was focused upon a single figure, was naturally limited, and grew more so with the development of critical taste and the emergence of rival themes. Relatively few characters possessed of

sufficient vividness and novelty to hold the undivided attention through a performance could be imagined; and the successful presentation of such a character required very unusual poetic power. To Marlowe's great portraits of Tamburlaine and Faustus should be added Shakespeare's treatment of Richard III, a surprisingly human presentment of the Machiavellian type; as well as the apotheosis of the hero-king in "Henry V," and probably the less happy efforts of Chapman in the Biron and Bussy d'Ambois plays. The final triumph of the species is the figure of Hamlet, where we find a close study of a complex individual superimposed upon a preëxistent melodramatic plot.

It was in its disintegration that the heroic drama exerted its widest influence. Only by distributing the psychological interest among a number of figures was it possible either to secure an approximation to real conditions of life or to make use of the infinite permutations of mood due to the interaction of the various figures upon one another. Only by such procedure, moreover, was it practicable to reconcile interest in character with interest in plot. The execution of these final perfections was the main contribution of Shakespeare's tragic practice. It was he who extended character interest and psychological truth from the protagonists of the drama to its meanest subordinates; and it was he, equally, who, while normally resting the chief attention upon individual character, yet made the presentment of character advance by means of the fullest stage action and the most careful evolution of a dramatic plot.

Marlowe's last great tragedies, "The Jew of Malta" and "Edward II," show important variations from the

type of heroic drama. In the former play, excessive engrossment with melodramatic plot effect, due probably to the example of Kyd, causes the total distortion of the main figure. It may even be questioned whether the vivid portrayal of Barabas in the first acts is not rather an unconscious reminiscence of the poet's earlier manner than a part of his serious aim. "Edward II" displays an evident desire to escape from the one-man type of drama; and this escape is effected — rather curiously and somewhat to the detriment of the piece — not by the juxtaposition of several figures of equivalent dramatic weight, but by giving predominating importance to each of three or four during various portions of the play. Gaveston, Edward and Young Mortimer never become parties in an equal tragic conflict, but each in turn assumes the centre of the stage and absorbs the attention of the spectators almost as completely during his period of ascendancy as Tamburlaine and Faustus had done before. "The Jew of Malta" and "Edward II" show, therefore, that Marlowe's practical experience was teaching him the necessity of presenting plot as well as character, and that he did not hesitate in pursuit of the former interest to make very heavy sacrifices in poetic and psychological effect.

Shakespeare's "Richard II" is an obvious derivative from "Edward II," and represents an advance chiefly in the answer which it gives to the problem merely evaded in the other play. Here, for perhaps the first time, plot interest and character interest are combined by the treatment of a conflict arising from the opposition of contrasted mental types. The impractical and unreliable, though emotionally rich, nature of Richard is set forth with the broad full delineation

accorded to Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Faustus and to Shakespeare's earlier figure of Richard III; but by outlining against this poetic hero the complementary personality of the political hero, Bolingbroke, and by attributing the misfortunes of Richard to his lack of qualities possessed by his successful rival, the author at once motivates the action of the piece, and brings his careful portrayal of each of the main figures into direct relation both with the incidents of the plot and with a definite theory of life. The device thus inaugurated of evolving plot out of the conflict of antagonistic types of character became the means by which Shakespeare attained some of his greatest triumphs. The contrast between Brutus and Cassius, Antony and Octavius, Othello and Iago, gave him opportunity not only for the most brilliant revelations of character, but also for the most thrilling scenes of intrigue and action.

Thus the heroic play, having inculcated the study of the human personality, gave place to the more accurate reflection of life which it had made possible. In the time of Shakespeare's maturity the only plays of heroic type really holding the public ear were, with a few exceptions, the chronicle histories, which detailed in loosely cohering scenes the most notable events in the lives of familiar national characters. These plays, constituting, with the other histories, a class apart, owed their temporary vogue to special conditions and require separate discussion.

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CHAPTER VIII

ROMANTIC COMEDY AND PASTORAL COMEDY

THE Puritan assailants of the drama quoted in the last chapter[1] confuse three distinct species of literature in their mention of the ungodly materials employed by the early playwrights. The heroic legend, against which they inveigh in greatest detail, was either of native origin, or had been long naturalized and adopted into general currency. We have seen how it contributed indispensable elements to the evolution of tragedy. The other works were all exotics, — members of two great types of fiction, each of which was only just establishing its position in English favor when the drama approached maturity.

The debt of the Elizabethan theatre to the prose romance is well known to all who read handbooks on Shakespeare. The names of the novels on which were based the plays of "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," "The Winter's Tale," "Measure for Measure," "Othello," and many others, are sufficiently familiar; while contemporary collections of stories, like Painter's "Palace of Pleasure" and its rival, "The Petite Palace of Pettie His Pleasure," have in late years been reprinted, and enjoy at least a scholarly public. Such books as Greene's "Pandosto," Lodge's "Rosalinde," and Sidney's "Arcadia" have even, it may be hoped, passed beyond the stage of purely critical interest, and make a modest appeal upon their merits. Works of this

[1] See pp. 233, 234.

kind were produced during the latter half of Elizabeth's reign in ever increasing number, occasionally by writers like Lodge and Greene and Sidney as original literature under foreign stimulus; more often by the easy means of translation.

A radical difference appears between the two species of imported fiction which thus simultaneously contested the popular favor. The one was represented by the realistic novel, Italian for the most part in character and in origin. The tales of Boccaccio, Bandello, Cinthio, and their imitators were the main source of English compilations like that of Painter, and served throughout the entire period as an inexhaustible treasury of plot and a rough pattern for realistic delineation. But this influence, though copiously exerted both in comedy and tragedy, was not deep or significant. The greatest dramatists always modified the crude effects of Italian realism by large imaginative infusions; and Shakespeare, who was an incessant borrower of its plot outlines, never failed to reject its philosophy of life. "Twelfth Night" is a superb example of the poet's skill in harmonizing a coarse intrigue plot with the delicate romantic atmosphere which he derived from the other type of exotic story.

The second influence was that of the pastoral romance, introduced chiefly from Italy and Spain, productive first of a rich prose literature and then of the peculiar species of "romantic comedy," which flourished with the most buoyant life for a dozen or fifteen years and disappeared, never again to encounter the conditions necessary to its revival. This comedy, of which Shakespeare is the unrivalled master, always betrayed clearly its non-dramatic origin. Assuming upon

its transference to the stage rather the mere setting than the substance of theatrical art, it continued to base its appeal upon the kind of interest excited peculiarly by narrative fiction. Fundamentally, it depends always for the attainment of its effects upon the handling of "atmosphere" and romantic accident rather than psychological interpretation or dramatic intrigue. The fact is worthy of the most careful attention that such an ephemeral type, which obviously only clings to the skirts of true drama, and with which so keen and delicate a critic as Hazlitt frankly shows his lack of sympathy,[1] should be the main instrument of many of Shakespeare's noblest comic achievements.

The story of pastoral influence on European literature goes back to the very beginning of the renaissance movement. The eclogues of Vergil, to a smaller extent those of Theocritus, and even more perhaps the modern Vergilian imitations of the Italian Mantuanus (Battista Spagnuoli, d. 1516), introduced writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to a species of fiction which afforded a very welcome relief both from the blood-curdling narratives of heroic romance and from the sordid realism of the popular novel. [The strict pastoral seems seldom to have appealed to the more general and unfashionable public: it was essentially too remote from the real activities and interests of men, and often too lacking in excitement.] By the academic circles of the Continent, however, this genre was taken up with an enthusiasm which it is nowadays far beyond our power to comprehend. The accident of the Vergilian connection and the opportunity furnished by the pastoral of interweaving constant allusions to Ovidian

[1] See Hazlitt, *English Comic Writers*, Lecture II.

mythology and the Golden Age tradition doubtless gave this particular art-form a factitious attraction for the classic zealots of the Revival of Letters. It is not necessary to deal here specifically with the pastoral eclogues in verse. The diffusion of this type throughout Europe is well enough indicated by the Latin works of Mantuanus, the court pastorals of the French writer, Clement Marot, and by the "Shepherd's Calendar" of their imitator Spenser. As a source of the Elizabethan drama, the pastoral element requires consideration under two aspects: (1) as it appears in the prose pastoral romance, and (2) as we find it already in dramatic shape in the plays of the school of Tasso.

The first important pastoral romance is of the most respectable antiquity, and takes us back far beyond the period indicated for the general prevalence of the type. It is the "Daphnis and Chloe" of the Alexandrian Greek poet, Longus, and belongs to the fifth century A. D. The story, which is a kind of foreshadowing of "Paul and Virginia," deals with the companionship and love of shepherd and shepherdess from their earliest childhood. About the hero and heroine are assembled the usual other characters of the later pastoral convention: the wise old shepherds; the wicked herdsman, in subsequent treatments frequently presented as a Satyr, who attempts to destroy the happiness of the lovers; pirates and similar intruders from the outside world, who are brought into the story for the purpose of abducting or otherwise afflicting the main characters. A contemporary work even more romantic in tone, and likewise written in decadent Greek, is the "Æthiopian History" of Heliodorus, treating the impossible adventures and mutual love of two embodiments of all the

proprieties — Theagenes and Charicleia — who, after being captured by the usual piratical crew and enduring numberless accidents and escapes, are in the end discovered and made happy by their true parents just in time to prevent them from perishing as sacrifices to the patron deity of their country. Daphnis and Chloe and the "Æthiopica" were both rendered into French before 1550 by Jacques Amyot, subsequently the translator of Plutarch. During the reign of Elizabeth there appeared an English version of Longus's pastoral by Angel Day (1587), while Heliodorus was very splendidly translated by Thomas Underdowne. These Greek romances, however, should not be regarded as having set the pastoral fashion. They were rather recalled into vogue by the existence of works in the same style which had arisen independently.

The modern pastoral convention is said to begin with the "Ameto" of Boccaccio, a work centring about the lamentations of seven nymphs, who relate the stories of their unhappy love to a model listener — the shepherd Ameto. At the end of each tale metrical eclogues are inserted, and we thus find the blending of prose fiction and lyric so usual in the pastoral romances of the Elizabethans. Another famous Italian work is the "Arcadia" of Sannazzaro, first published in 1502. Though hardly a true pastoral on any analysis, it gave to Sidney's book a good deal more than its mere name, and did as much, doubtless, as any single production of the time to originate interest in the type.

Much the most important of the developed pastoral romances is the "Diana" of the Spaniard Jorge de Montemayor,[1] a book which had an enormous vogue,

[1] Montemayor was by birth a Portuguese, but wrote Castilian.

and settled for a considerable period the structure and subject matter of the type. An English translation of the "Diana," by Bartholomew Yong, was published in 1598, but had been executed, the preface tells us, many years before. The work is a complex tissue of narratives of misfortune in love, related successively by various shepherds and nymphs. It is best known to the Shakespeare student from the circumstances that the tale of the Shepherdess Felismena appears to have suggested the story of Proteus and Julia in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and that the Shepherd Montano may have suggested the name of a character in "Othello" and another in the older version of "Hamlet." Yet the book is by no means uninteresting in itself, and its interspersed songs possess very considerable merit in Yong's translation. It is worth noting, as an indication of the novel's popularity, that the compiler of the anthology, "England's Helicon," quotes Yong's versions of Montemayor more frequently, I think, than he cites any of the native English poets.

The limited plot material and monotonous atmosphere of the pastoral convention were in themselves unsuited to that indefinite expansion to which all popular renaissance themes were likely to be subjected. Such works *de longue haleine* as the "Diana" could be spun out of the thin web of pastoral incident only by the extensive interpolation of conventional material from the heroic romance. A tendency to the introduction of adventurous incident is observable in "Daphnis and Chloe," and, in much higher degree, in the "Æthiopica" of Heliodorus. The Spanish school of Montemayor, from which Sidney inherited, pushed to the final limit the ridiculous combination of nymphs and

shepherds from the pastoral world with knights, monsters, and sorcerers out of the old romances. The consequences of this *mélange* can be traced not only in such narrative works as the "Arcadia" and the "Faerie Queene," but also in the variegated effects of humble plays like "Mucedorus," and in the universal fondness among more meritorious dramas for the insertion of sylvan or pastoral scenes within the articulations of a serious plot.

The more legitimately pastoral sections of the "Diana" exemplify pretty well the entire range, in point of machinery, atmosphere, and incident, of the pastoral novels of Greene and Lodge; and it was by means of such works as the "Menaphon" and "Rosalinde" of these writers that pastoral influence most seriously impressed the English drama. The effect of the Italian pastoral play appears to have been later in date, and certainly it produced less general results.

Neither in the romances of Montemayor and Sidney, nor in the simpler novels of the type, is the pastoral convention treated with seriousness or consistency. To a smaller extent even than in the Italian play is the life of the imaginary shepherd society described for any intrinsic interest of its own. Montemayor uses the pastoral setting, as Mr. Stanley Weyman uses the setting of French history, merely to furnish an environment sufficiently vague and remote from real life for the free movement of stories of knightly love and adventure. The same thing is true in the main of the novels of Greene and Lodge. The success of these works was not conditioned upon the portrayal of manners or types of character such as might be imagined to exist among Arcadian shepherds; it resulted rather from the curi-

osity to know how the tangled mesh of incident was to be untwisted in the end, and from the presentation of a thoroughly fanciful world whose attractiveness consisted in its entire freedom from realistic trammels.

The prose pastorals in England and elsewhere would thus appear nearly destitute of dramatic possibilities. That they should, notwithstanding, have exercised so appreciable an influence as they did upon comedy seems at first almost paradoxical; yet the phenomenon is at once explained when one comes to examine the particular plays produced under the tutelage of such works. It is not definitely pastoral dramas, like "The Sad Shepherd" and "The Faithful Shepherdess" that show the influence of Montemayor's school. It is rather the unique and exquisitely beautiful art-form which we call, *par excellence*, Romantic Comedy, work like the sylvan parts of Greene's "James IV" and "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" and Shakespeare's "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night."

Robert Greene may be safely reckoned as the founder of this type of drama; and there can be no doubt that what Greene put into romantic comedy was precisely what he had learned as a writer of pastoral romances. In the typical plays of Greene and in the related comedies of Shakespeare's middle and latest periods, the interest excited by the presentation of a dramatic conflict is reduced or evanescent. Comparatively speaking, there is little psychological development. Many of the characters are quite shadowy; none — considering the known powers of the writer — is possessed of the highest degree of dramatic intensity. These plays depend for their great attractiveness upon just the elements which one finds in novels like "Menaphon" and "Pan-

dosto," — upon an imaginary "atmosphere," half pastoral, half that of fairyland, and upon the series of absorbing adventures which befall the actors without their very serious responsibility.

Thus, the primary influence of the great pastoral literature of the Renaissance upon the Elizabethan theatre had for its chief result the domestication within the drama of essentially non-dramatic narrative ideals derived from the contaminated pastoral novels of the day. One reason for this is, naturally, the enormous current demand for all sorts of theatrical entertainment, the inability to supply this demand from the slender resources of existing comedy and tragedy, and the consequent attraction upon the stage of literary matter which properly belonged outside the walls of the theatre, and which in all other epochs has found narrative expression. Greene, an ardent seeker after popularity, already famous as the author of pastoral novels, saw his opportunity. By dressing his essentially fictional themes in rough dramatic guise, he instituted a new species of comedy, which from first to last comprised stories of love and sylvan adventure rather than plays dealing with human character and conflict.[1] It is not easy to criticise this type. Its successful exemplification, as well as its very existence, was the result of its falling upon an age which qualified the eager search into the truth of actuality by a peculiarly large admixture of romantic nonsense, and read a mystic philosophy into the trite impossibilities of the nursery tale. The

[1] The relations between Greene's early pastoral novels and his romantic comedies is thus precisely analogous to that which exists between Lyly's *Euphues* and the latter writer's courtly comedies in euphuistic prose. See p. 171 ff.

mouth of the judicial theorist is stopped by the fact that the greatest artist of the day moulded in this form the brightest and most universally loved plays of his maturity and by the further marvel that he chose the same fragile and even trivial vehicle for the last deep fraught expression of his ripened age.

Pastoral drama of a kind had been freely produced during the decade immediately previous to Greene's first concern with the type. But all these works, initiated perhaps by Peele's graceful "Arraignment of Paris" and continued in the sylvan comedies of Lyly, are expressions of courtly scholarship, compacted of mythological anecdote with varied reminiscences of the classical eclogue. They show no demonstrable trace of that influence of the pastoral romance which was the determining factor in romantic comedy.

Greene's first venture in the new style, "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," is a medley illustrating to a degree unusual even in the plays of this imitative writer the desire to profit by all the current recommendations to popularity. It cannot be doubted that the comedy owes its original conception to the vogue of Marlowe's "Faustus," just as Greene's "Alphonsus" had earlier been prompted by the success of "Tamburlaine." In the interval which had elapsed since the production of the earlier work, Greene had measured the range of his dramatic powers. By selecting a supernatural theme inherently much lighter than the dark story of Faust, and by restricting himself to the presentation of the most innocent feats of white magic, Greene introduced upon the stage a type of beneficent, romantic conjurer which long enjoyed an unusual vogue. The main appeal of this most popular play lay, however, less in the do-

ings of its two titular heroes than in the conventional romantic portrayal of the love of Edward and the Lord Lacy. Here, in the intercourse of prince and peer with the humble pastoral nymph among the cream-pots of the dairy and the booths of the rustic fair, or in the avenues of the King's forest, Greene found a thoroughly congenial subject, in the elaboration of which he has blended the gracefully unreal atmosphere of the familiar pastoral novel with certain touches of truer feeling and closer observation. In accordance with a taste which Greene perhaps began, the vagueness of the Utopian setting of this play has been relieved, without being brought at all closer to the truth of nature, by the introduction of fanciful portraits of real persons. Henry III and his heir, the three visiting sovereigns of Germany, Castile, and Saxony, and the prominent nobles of the time are pictured in consciously unhistoric lights; while Eleanor — the reward bestowed by poetic justice upon the prince in return for his magnanimous surrender of Margaret — is idealized with an indifference to actual fact probably no less complete than that which permitted Peele in his "Edward I" to paint the same reputable queen as a monster of infidelity.

It is generally agreed that the chief merit of Greene's romantic plays, "Friar Bacon" and "James IV," apart from the creation of their fresh atmosphere, lies in the character of his heroines, Margaret, Dorothea, and Ida; and that these figures, together with the idyllic environment they carry with them, are a direct importation from Greene's pastoral novels. The type of woman so presented, always essentially the same, and sprung originally, it seems, from the poet's most intimate personal experience, remained an established

figure in romantic comedy, and gave the species its distinctive tone. It was doubtless Greene's initiative which placed the action of Shakespeare's similar plays in a woman's world, remote always from realistic sophistication,—a world of sentiment rather than reason, in which Rosalind, Viola, Imogen and Perdita tend to outvalue their masculine associates.

A capital fault in Greene's dramatic method was always the attempt to crowd into each individual play the entire stock of incidents and plot devices at his command. This tendency doubtless accounts for the dog-in-the-manger attitude toward other dramatists manifested in Greene's famous "Groatsworth of Wit." It explains also the mingling in his own plays of tawdry imitations from all the earlier styles with many hasty and superficial sketches of original motifs, ineffective in Greene's presentment, but requiring only the careful development of Shakespeare and other plagiarists of genius to become extraordinarily fruitful. "Friar Bacon" contains much which can only be understood either as a deliberate bait for vulgar popularity or an archaic survival from outworn styles. A spurious affinity to the mythological court comedy of Peele and Lyly is suggested by interlarding the speech of the peasant maid of Fressingfield with allusions to Phœbus and Semele, Paris, Ænon, and the vale of Troy. Much of the magical business, such as the spiriting of the Hostess of Henley and Friar Bungay through the air, and the conjuring rigid of swords and tongues, is little more than a copy from some of the most prosaic scenes of "Faustus"; while the final identification of the clown, Miles, with the old vice, and his dispatch to hell on the devil's back are still franker retrogressions to the low

art level of the interlude. All this extraneous and ill-digested matter, together with the unfortunate attempt to add the specious attraction of chronicle history to a work of pure imagination, confuses the issues of the play, and diverts attention from the strain of fanciful idealism which it derives from the pastoral romance and to which it owes its particular charm. By isolating and developing this special feature, Shakespeare brought into strong relief the merits apprehended only subconsciously by the readers of Greene.

"The Scottish History of James IV," probably Greene's latest play, marks a considerable advance in style, but hardly shows any improvement in its treatment of dramatic plot and character. The artificial mythological verbiage, a notable mannerism of the earlier plays, has been almost entirely supplanted; but the author continues to depend for the success of the comedy rather upon the inclusion of a great variety of possible sources of interest than upon the harmonious evolution of a single theme. The main subject is derived, with very substantial alterations, from an Italian novel of Cinthio ("Hecatommithi," 3d decade, 1). Yet the real merit of the drama consists in the idyllic story which evolves about the two heroines, both embodiments of the unworldly type, who live and love, resist temptation, or wander in disguise through a sylvan land of romance wholly antipodal to the world of chicanery and politics tenanted by the insurrectionary Scottish peers, the classical parasite, Ateukin, and the symbolical Lawyer, Merchant, and Divine of Act V, scene 4. The title of the piece and the thin political scenes, lacking equally in verity and verisimilitude, are dishonest appeals to the temporary taste for history

plays. They make only the slightest impression upon the reader, who remembers the play mainly for its presentation of the romantic figures and complex love adventures of Dorothea and Ida.

One excrescent element in this medley deserves somewhat more sympathetic consideration. In agreement with the practice of Kyd, Greene has set his play within a dramatic framework, consisting principally of the dialogue of Oberon, King of Fairies and the misanthropic Scot Bohan, — a figure perhaps suggested by Plutarch's Timon. As it stands, this introductory matter offends against the unity of the play, and makes it only the harder to effect the romantic illusion requisite to the appreciation of the main plot. Yet the idea that prompted the juxtaposition of the fairy king and the soured worldling was a bold one, which Shakespeare borrowed with notable success in the most venturous of his romantic comedies, "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," and again when in "As You Like It" he made the melancholy Jaques a denizen of Arden.

A comparison of "James IV" with its closest Shakespearean parallel will illustrate the nature of this kind of comedy. Instead of trying, like Greene, to lend realistic probability to the palpably fictitious matter of erotic romance by an admixture of bogus history, Shakespeare chooses the contrary alternative and frankly throws down the thin wall separating the world of fancy from pure fairyland. For this procedure also Greene had indeed thrown out a blind hint by making the sons of Bohan actors in the main drama as well, but the innovation was in his case as ineffective as it was unreasoned. Shakespeare, on the other hand, by bringing his Oberon and Titania into the central plot as actors on

equal terms with the idyllic lovers, both waives the necessity of narrowly realistic motivation, and secures for his stage the dainty imaginary setting in which alone the delicate figures of ideal romance can appear to advantage. Doubtless the masque-like character of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" encouraged Shakespeare to take bolder liberties with the law of nature than otherwise he would have attempted; but, throughout, his practice shows his denial of Greene's idea that an imaginary story can be benefited by a thin disguise of specious realism. The very titles of Shakespeare's most daring performances in romantic comedy — "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night or What You Will," "The Winter's Tale" — seem meant to emphasize the fundamental axiom that dream figures can only be presented upon a visionary stage.

Greene's greatest continuator in romantic comedy was, of course, Shakespeare. But several minor dramas of the day show how the elder poet's initiative affected his equals and inferiors, and illustrate very well the scope and possibilities of this type of comedy before Shakespeare had refined it into an instrument of sublime irregularity which only he himself has ever satisfactorily employed. The "Pleasant Commodie of faire Em the Millers daughter of Manchester: With the loue of William the Conqueror," which seems to have been produced between 1589 and 1591,[1] is an inartistic medley

[1] Lord Strange's servants, by whom the title-page of the earliest edition states the play to have been performed, first appear as an acting company in 1589. (For the origin of this company, see W. W. Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, ii, 71.) The posterior limit is indicated by the fact that two lines in *Fair Em* seem to be ridiculed in Greene's *Farewell to Folly*, 1591.

of two plots in the two most popular current styles. One portion, developed entirely in the manner of the old heroic play, is a happy version of a French tragical story. It treats the love of William the Conqueror and the Marquis Lubeck for the princesses Blanche and Mariana, presenting the journey of the Conqueror in the guise of the errant knight Robert of Windsor to the court of Denmark in quest of the lady with whose image, displayed on Lubeck's shield at a tournament, he has fallen enamoured; depicting his subsequent change of passion, and his abduction of the one princess in the garments of the other, together with the armed pursuit of the royal father, and the final reconciliation of all parties. The second plot is, on the other hand, an imperfect attempt at pastoral romantic comedy, centring about the Manchester Miller (really a valiant knight in disguise), his fair daughter, and the three courtiers who contest her love and prove their falsehood or fidelity amid these humble surroundings. The doubtful question of the relative priority of this play and "Friar Bacon" probably needs no discussion. I am unable to discover any trace of the particular connection which the late Professor Churton Collins [1] fancied that he detected between the two works. Nor does there appear to exist any substantial reason either for regarding "Fair Em" as an allegorical reflection of London stage conditions or for seeing in the allusions to local celebrities and landmarks an indication that the play was originally destined for presentation in Manchester. Rather, the probability seems overwhelming that these references were borrowed by the dramatist, with no obscurer purpose than the desire

[1] See Collins, Plays and Poems of Greene, ii, 4.

of verisimilitude and specific detail, from the ballad or prose narrative upon which he based this portion of the play. In any case, "Fair Em" is far inferior to "Friar Bacon" as a romantic comedy. Its rustic scenes, though well enough articulated among themselves and not deficient in characterization, possess very little of the idyllic charm which Greene was able to impart, and which more than anything else gave this type of drama vital power at a time when the heroic play, equally "romantic" in a sense, had lost all true hold on the progressive theatre.

One of the most immediate successors of Greene in the writing of romantic comedy was Anthony Munday, who concerned himself during the five or six years following Greene's death with several ventures in this style. The earliest of these works appears to have been "John a Kent and John a Cumber," a play preserved in a manuscript dated December, 1595, but not printed till the nineteenth century. Imitation of "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" seems clear in the choice of the subject with its diamond-cut-diamond theme of rival conjurors exploiting their powers in the attempt to advance or retard the progress of a complex love intrigue. "John a Kent and John a Cumber" is a lighthearted piece, composed in very fair verse, and constructed with a stiff symmetry which, though glaringly superficial, is yet not unworthy of the poet described by Meres as the "best plotter" among the comic writers of the age. In all the qualities which lend special charm to the romantic comedies of Greene and Shakespeare, however, Munday's play shows itself entirely deficient. Its plot is likely to impress the reader as thin and barren. It lacks the varied richness of tone which, in spite

of all their patent absurdities, raises both "Friar Bacon" and "James IV" above the suspicion of clap-trap. The twin heroines of "John a Kent," Sidanen and Marian, are mere lay figures, possessed neither of individual character, nor even of any conventional grace; and the four lovers are, if possible, even more completely without significance. Consequently, the romantic element in the play proves an almost total failure, and the sole interest hangs upon the two subsidiary threads of the contest between the magicians and the interpolated buffoonery of Turnop.

Munday's curious play, "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington, afterward called Robin Hood," was purchased by Henslowe in February, 1598, for the use of the Lord Admiral's Company, by whom the edition of 1601 states it to have been acted. The unnecessary complexity of structure which very generally characterizes Elizabethan dramaturgy is particularly conspicuous in the "Downfall" and its sequel, "The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington." In both plays the events depicted are separated by two removes from immediate actuality, since the main text is represented as written by the poet Skelton, who, with other notabilities of the court of Henry VIII, rehearses it in view of an approaching performance before the King. Thus, casual interpolations in Skeltonical rime and critical discussions between the actors repeatedly dispel the illusion necessary to the main story; while the audience is rather unreasonably required to connect with each of the important figures on the stage two distinct personalities separated by three centuries and a half. At one moment we listen to the opinions of Skelton and Sir John Eltham, while the next instant

we must associate with the same actors the words of Friar Tuck and Little John.

The main plot of the "Downfall" is greatly confused. In combining the romantic theme with the historical story of Prince John's tyrannies, Munday was only following the example set by Greene's two great comedies. It is hard, however, to hold the author excused, even in the light of Tennyson's similar practice, for the tasteless perversion which transforms the ideal yeoman, Robin Hood, and his Maid Marian into insipid representations of distressed nobility. Though the "Downfall" shows considerable familiarity with the stories of such popular heroes as Robin Hood and the Pinner of Wakefield, the greenwood scenes certainly lack as a whole the charm and convincingness of atmosphere upon which the appeal of romantic comedy is mainly based. Yet this first of Munday's Robin Hood plays expresses not inadequately the cheery optimism of the type, and it even contains some few passages which are not unworthy of having influenced the nearly contemporaneous "As You Like It."[1] Such, for example, is the pretty scene where Robin sleeps on a green bank with Marian strewing flowers upon him, while Marian's exiled and famished old father, Fitzwater, enters, to be refreshed and comforted.

The second Robin Hood play, "The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington . . . with the lamentable tragedy of chaste Matilda, his fair Maid Marian, poisoned at Dunmow by King John," belongs clearly to the type of history play rather than to romantic comedy. How-

[1] See A. H. Thorndike's paper, "The Relation of *As You Like It* to *Robin Hood Plays*," *Journal of Germanic Philology*, iv (1902), 59–69.

ever, it was both produced and printed in the same year as the earlier part, with which it is closely connected by the common Skeltonical framework and by a series of prospective and retrospective allusions. The main reason for the striking difference between the two parts is doubtless the fact that the guiding hand in the construction of the "Death" was not Munday's, but that of a collaborator of very different taste; namely, Henry Chettle. Chettle was, indeed, paid by Henslowe for revising the earlier part about nine months after its original performance; but his contributions to that play do not appear to be of very great consequence or easily demonstrable.[1] The "Death," however, everywhere shows the light atmosphere of pastoral romance dissipated by the incompatible breath of gruesome sensationalism which marks the author of "Hoffman."

The "Death" has no pretence to unity. The actual story of Robin ends in the poisoning of that hero at about the close of the first quarter of the play. The remainder is a confessed excrescence, carrying on the story of Matilda's woes and the sufferings of England under John in a manner suggestive of the most lurid of the early "histories." The precise decision concerning the authorship of the "Death" is obstructed by the fact of a revision subsequent to the original composition, and by the probably intimate relationship of the play with a lost "Funeral of Richard Cœur de Lion" in which both Chettle and Munday collaborated with two other employees of Henslowe. It seems certain,

[1] The Reverend Ronald Bayne thinks that Chettle's revision of the *Downfall* "clearly consisted of the induction in which the play is set and the Skeltonical rimes," *Cambridge History of English Literature*, v, 355.

however, that the earlier scenes, in which Robin Hood still appears, belong no more to the species of romantic comedy than do the entirely non-pastoral scenes which follow. Romantic comedy always involves the tacit assumption of the impossibility of a tragic conclusion and always emphasizes atmosphere rather than specific incident. But throughout the play before us the attention is held almost solely by spectacles of lurid crime or by morbid pictures of guilt and misery. The main "attractions" of the opening scenes consist in the perfectly wanton and inartistic assassination of Robin and the highly colored sketch of the fiendish diabolism of Doncaster. In the later, more historical scenes, the interest is concentrated upon similar objects: the hideous passion of John, hideously portrayed; the Dantesque death of Lady Bruce and her son, starved in Windsor Tower; the pathetic end with which Matilda meekly closes a long chapter of woes; and finally the sensational despair and suicide of John's impious tool, the murderer Brand.

A later play, greatly superior to "Fair Em" and Munday's comedies, and much more clearly influenced by Greene's "Friar Bacon," is associated with "Fair Em" by an absurd ascription to Shakespeare. "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" is one of the happiest and most artistic among the minor works of its age. Registered for publication in 1607, it is known to have enjoyed marked popularity on the stage three years earlier, and was presumably composed shortly before the end of Elizabeth's reign, — a dozen years after the production of "Friar Bacon." The two prominent attractions of the latter work — the figure of the benevolent conjurer and the development of an idyllic

love plot among the surroundings of an English woodland landscape — are here blended with a good deal more harmony than in Greene's play; and they are combined with a humorously sympathetic portrayal of bourgeois types which owes an obvious debt to Shakespeare's treatment of the fraternity of Bottom. "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" is perhaps the best romantic comedy outside of Shakespeare. This play shows how, under rare favoring conditions, it is possible, in spite of the dicta of dramatic theory, to make truly effective on the stage the poetic treatment of a fanciful love story, though possessing no important measure either of psychological distinction or realistic import. Some of the happier Elizabethans succeeded thus in endowing with a permanent charm their responses to that irregular theatrical demand which again recently has enjoyed a brief hour of purely transitory acceptance in the vogue of the dramatized romantic novel.

"The Merry Devil of Edmonton" has probably only a single rival among the non-Shakespearean romantic comedies of its decade. That it finds in "The Shoemaker's Holiday" of Dekker; and it surpasses Dekker's play by reason of its superior homogeneity. "The Shoemaker's Holiday," one of the most attractive Elizabethan comedies, is also one of the most difficult to bring into conformity with the rules of any distinct dramatic type. Like the "Old Fortunatus" of the same poet, it is based upon a mixture of pseudo-historical, romantic, and realistic elements, which will hardly bear analysis or separation.

The absorbing interest in the love plot of "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" seems to have prevented the in-

troduction of the magical business originally contemplated by the author. The first scene, indeed, presents Fabell as a conventional mediæval sorcerer lamenting in lines evidently inspired by Marlowe the expiration of his compact with the devil, and winning seven years' reprieve only by cheating the spirit that seeks his soul. Fabell's actual services to the lovers, however, never pass the bounds of natural law; and the total impression of his figure — kindly, confident, and charitably wise — is rather anticipatory of Prospero than reminiscent of Faustus or Bacon. The main story, in picturing the triumph of youthful love over the designs of covetous parents, gives a freshened woodland version of a theme long popular with the imitators of Roman comedy. The bright idealistic treatment of English sylvan landscape reproduces the distinctive tone of Greene, who, inflamed with the general patriotic ardor of the Armada era, likes always to make his pastoral and Utopian sketches redound to the credit of fair England. But in the portrayal of the four humorous village types, the deer-stealers, Smug, Banks, Blague, and Sir John, the author of the "Merry Devil" has added a not inharmonious note of kindly realism which deepens and humanizes the romantic interest in a manner unknown to Greene and peculiarly characteristic of Shakespeare. The slightly anachronistic device of the convent to which the heroine is sent by the obstruction in the course of true love, and from which the timely intervention of her chosen suitor rescues her, is similar to the employment of the same stock motive in Friar Bacon. So, too, the central idea of the generous assistance of the less favored rival in effecting the lovers' happiness is a rationalized version of the hackneyed

theme of magnanimity in love, which forms the main plot of Lyly's "Campaspe" and of "Friar Bacon," which Peele delicately ridiculed in "The Old Wives' Tale," and which Shakespeare reduced to absurdity by his unskilful employment in the last act of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona."

Any consideration of romantic comedy must culminate in the study of Shakespeare. To this species, which derived from the pastoral narrative its primary view of life, belong six of that poet's works, — two of the earliest period ("The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "A Midsummer-Night's Dream"); two comedies of middle life ("As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night"); and two of his latest performances ("The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest"); while "Cymbeline," "The Merchant of Venice," and the genuine portion of "Pericles" display very considerable traces of the same influence.

The significance and distinct character of the strain of idealistic fancy which thus manifests itself intermittently through the entire life-work of Shakespeare have seldom been adequately stressed in appreciations either of the individual poet or of his dramatic *milieu*. The romantic comedies just mentioned are the most notable manifestations during the period extending from Greene's death to Shakespeare's retirement (1592–1612) of the centrifugal tendency indispensable to the preservation of the balance of poetry against the increasingly powerful local and introspective bent of the time. It is greatly to be deplored that the undiscriminating extension of the Elizabethan title to the literature of the earlier Stuart reigns has led to a general ignoring of the radical difference in tone between the

work of the early seventeenth century and that of the final quarter of the sixteenth.

The truth is that the last of the "Elizabethans" was not Shirley, but Shakespeare. The gulf which the accident of history created between the age of Charles I and that of Dryden separates far less opposed conceptions of life and art than that, centring about 1603, which distinguishes the prevailingly idealistic attitude represented by the "Faery Queene" and "Shepherds' Calendar," "Tamburlaine," "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," and the "Arcadia" from the predominant self-concern of the most characteristic productions of the next generation, — Jonson's and Middleton's realistic comedies and Donne's metaphysical poems. The genuine Elizabethan spirit passed with the passing of the peculiar imaginative exhilaration and the substitution of the microscopic treatment of contemporary whims and trifles for the earlier ambition to body forth "the forms of things unknown."

Shakespeare nowhere shows himself the friend of uncompromising realism. All his sketches of common life, though brilliantly accurate, are both universalized and interpreted by their romantic setting. Moreover, in the six comedies particularly enumerated above, he puts himself into direct and — in the case of the later examples, at least — into conscious opposition to the practical trend of the day, appealing almost solely to the fancy, and ignoring the realities and probabilities of the humdrum world to an extent unequalled perhaps in any other successful stage play. Three of these comedies — "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "As You Like It," and "The Winter's Tale" — are strict dramatizations of pastoral romance, while "Twelfth Night"

comes partly from the same source. The other two are, significantly, the happiest and most enthusiastic of Shakespeare's efforts at original plot construction. It is probably no accident that in this group of comedies also we approach closest to Shakespeare's individual self and find his most personal observations on the great problems of life and death, on love and marriage, poetry, music, and the world. Here, far more truly than in the sonnets or the great tragedies, Shakespeare unlocked his heart; and the dramatic irregularities of this group of plays, often slighted or slurred over, indicate, not carelessness simply, but hardened preference and reason.

The two distinguishing features of this set of comedies — features inherited from the pastoral novel and accentuated rather than reduced by Shakespeare — are the absence of the fundamental dramatic conflict which forms regularly the backbone both of comedy and tragedy, and the removal of practical logic from the control of character and emotion. Most of the passions in these plays are of like nature with the childish affection described in "The Two Noble Kinsmen" (I, iii, 69–74): —

> "But I
> And she I sigh and spoke of were things innocent,
> Lou'd for we did, and like the Elements
> That know not what, nor why, yet doe effect
> Rare issues by their operance, our soules
> Did so to one another!"

To compare such works with comedies of intrigue and character conflict, like "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Measure for Measure," or even with slightly more idealized speci-

mens such as "The Merchant of Venice" and "All 's Well that Ends Well"; or to group all together in the same general category that includes also the productions of Congreve, Goldsmith, and Sheridan, is to submit those we are considering to false and impossible standards of judgment and totally to misapprehend the author's aim and method.

"The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is an experimental early work hardly meriting special attention except for the promise of broad sympathy in the scene which brings together and contrasts the emotions of Proteus and Silvia, the host, and the disguised Julia.[1] "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" shows itself, indeed, an accomplished masterpiece in its development of a somewhat frivolous plot and in its treatment of the fairy machinery and the bourgeois types. The handling of the romantic figures remains, however, vague and hazy, the most notable advance appearing in the superior distinctness of the pair of heroines when contrasted with those in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and the ability to portray in Theseus a convincingly noble gentleman.

The other comedies of the class all belong, however, to the period of maturity, and all contain characters which rank among the most memorable and beloved in Shakespeare. Such are the figures of the four heroines, Rosalind, Viola, Perdita, and Miranda, together with the closely related Imogen and Marina of "Cymbeline" and "Pericles" respectively, and the diverse male trio: Touchstone, Prospero, and Jaques. Any comparison of these characters with the principal per-

[1] Act IV, scene 4. For an admirable appreciation of this scene, see Professor Dowden, *Shakspere's Mind and Art*, ed. 1901, 344.

sons of the other great dramas of Shakespeare — with Shylock, Falstaff, Iago, Hamlet, Lear, Benedick, Beatrice, or Isabella, for example — will show what restrictions must be made before the former can be justly praised for their truth to life or their illustration of human psychology. Shakespeare has nowhere portrayed with more delicate intuition the beauty and nobility of which mortal man is capable than in the great figures of these romantic comedies; but he diverges from his usual practice in showing character static rather than progressive, — in working, as it were, in the midst of a vacuum, and creating his Rosalind and Orlando, Prospero and Miranda full-grown, instead of letting them evolve their own character out of the mesh of circumstance and the cross purposes of worldly environment. The comedies dating from the close of the century present in Rosalind, Celia, Orlando, Olivia, Orsino, and Viola rather etherealized human beings in an imaginary setting. The last plays go farther and people a more fanciful world with hauntingly exquisite dream figures incapable of life on any earth we know.

In the rarefied air of these plays individual responsibility, the sheet-anchor of ordinary dramatic art, weighs very light. The early comedies, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," had dealt trivially with unpunished infidelities and impossible revolutions in love. "As You Like It" shows us the villain Oliver assuming in a trice the rôle of happy lover and the wicked Duke Frederick turning hermit at a word; while in the last plays the easy contemptuous pardon of Alonzo, Sebastian, and the odious Leontes leaves the reader thirsting for poetic justice. There is more in all this than that care-

lessness or indifference, which occasionally, as for example in "Measure for Measure," leads the poet to juggle with the strict balance of debit and credit in the interest of a harmonious conclusion.

The pastoral novelists had intentionally laid the scene of their romances in Utopia; and Shakespeare, in the plays which he developed in their manner, steadily heightened the gracious unreality of the setting. The result is that lofty serenity and unworldliness which animate the last plays and make them appeal forever less as dramatic pictures of life than as the ultimate achievements in high romance. But out of the special excellences of this type of play there arise as inevitable corollaries certain limitations. The supreme dramatist of the world can develop human character as it is known to us only out of the causes which in actual life evince it: the sublunary conflicts of worldling with worldling, and the action upon the individual of the tangled web of mundane duty and aspiration. The presentation of such conditions would be repugnant, of course, to the idyllic environment in which move the main figures of "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night"; any attempt at it would be totally subversive of the still rarer, vaguer atmosphere of "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest," — and this Shakespeare has understood better than his critics. The difference between Perdita and such creatures of the real world as Beatrice and Desdemona is the difference between inspired and revealed psychology. It would, perhaps, be difficult to decide which type is the more beautiful; but the whole history of drama shows the former to be infinitely harder of presentation. Even in Shakespeare's treatment, subordinate characters like Celia and Olivia —

much more, Oliver and Sebastian — fare somewhat badly on a stage which permits little use of the *minutiæ* of realistic differentiation. And it is natural also that the portraits of the heroines, where the delineation of mere mood and quiescent character can be made most effective, succeed better in general than those of the heroes (Orlando, Orsino, Florizel, and Ferdinand) from whom the reader is inclined to demand more concrete exhibitions of energy and action.

To infer a radical incompatibility between the charming unreality of these romantic comedies and the searching psychological analyses which his other great dramas present would indicate a misconception of Shakespeare's genius only second to that involved in the confusion of all under the same arbitrary definition. The creation of a universe of visionary loveliness where nobly ideal figures move freely and happily, relieved from the constraint and compromise of actual society, was the necessary correlative in a well-poised imagination to that close study of human souls in the toils of circumstance to which the tragedies and more serious comedies testify. Rosalind and Viola belong to the same period, temporally and spiritually, with Brutus and Portia, Hero, Don John, and Troilus. So, too, the heightened unworldliness of the great figures in "The Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," and "Cymbeline" is the natural complement and corrective of the painfully intense absorption in real life and real character which produced the immediately antecedent burst of tragedy. This power of refreshing the fancy in the realm of beautiful impossibilities was the quality which kept sweet Shakespeare's judgments of the actual world. Not only are the romantic plays indispensable to a

properly rounded appreciation of the poet's genius; they even offer the necessary explanation of the broad impartial wisdom and permanent truth of his deepest probings into character. It was the possession of the vein of pure fancy to which Shakespeare gives unrestrained scope in his valedictory works of "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest," that raises the complex psychological demonstrations of "Hamlet," "Lear," "Othello," and "Macbeth" high above the level of contemporary realism. Just so, on the other hand, the accuracy of his impressionistic, inductive sketches of Rosalind and Miranda is solely the result of the careful analyses of actual psychic conditions evidenced, for example, in the characterization of Beatrice and Benedick or the portrayal of Cordelia's refinement by suffering. Thus, the fact that Shakespeare has ventured, in the four mature plays which I have been especially considering, to depict on the stage more purely fanciful beings and circumstances than any other dramatist has ever successfully presented, instead of being exceptional or surprising, is the direct consequence of his portrayal elsewhere of the most searching studies of human character known to literature. The unsoured and unflinching exposition of the ruin of noble natures like Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth before the insidious and all-testing contact of the world was possible only to a disposition rich and sensitive enough to find relief in a balancing world of fancy, where perfect beauty might flourish without the pains of evolution, and nobility expand itself without conflict.

One deep mark the poet's sad experience of life, recorded by the tragedies and dark comedies, left upon his romantic plays in the increasing perception of the

essential impossibility of the dream world which the latter picture. The Arcadian environment, which in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is hardly distinguished consciously from reality, and which "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night" present with cheerful conviction, is in the last plays removed to the domain of the confessedly unreal by the wistfulness of its treatment and the blackness of the actual world against which it is opposed. On a stage which had already descended far toward crass sensationalism on the one hand and morbid realism on the other, "The Tempest" appeared as the last strong protest of the earlier idealism, and it has good claim to be regarded as the final genuine expression of the proper Elizabethan spirit.

Few terms or definitions can be made to hold good unreservedly for Shakespeare. The idyllic atmosphere inherited from pastoral romance inspires scenes of many of the plays not here specifically considered, refining their effects and giving them a charm not born of realistic accuracy. So, again, in the six romantic comedies, *par excellence*, the poet does not altogether lose touch with the standards and interests of the outer world. The mingling of realism and romance is most evenly carried out in "Twelfth Night." Here, behind the Illyrian landscape and the figures of Viola, Olivia, Orsino, and Sebastian, there appears a solid English background upon which Shakespeare repeats in Sir Toby and Aguecheek the sturdy mundane comedy of Falstaff and Slender, and piques on Malvolio his spite against militant Puritanism very much as in "Hamlet" he uses the stage of Denmark to unburden himself concerning current theatrical disputes. In "Twelfth

Night" the two worlds are very clearly distinguished. The realistic scenes appear through the filmy main-plot like actual figures behind a painted tissue curtain. The two atmospheres, constantly contiguous, can never be said to blend. And this necessity of defining the real from the unreal accounts largely for the absence of responsibility and retribution in romantic comedy. Sir Toby is too full-bodied a sinner to be punished for his breaches of Illyrian etiquette; and the dainty, visionary setting of "As You Like It" and "The Tempest" would never bear too heavy a stress on the worldly depravity of Oliver, Alonzo, or Antonio.

After Shakespeare, the dramatic imitation of pastoral romance became a dead convention maintained for the most part by the weaker poets and productive of the cheapest melodramatic effects. The freshness of tone which lends this type of drama its distinctive charm in the true Elizabethan examples had small place in the intellectual endowment of the Stuart playwrights. One may well feel it ground for congratulation that the limits of this work remove the necessity of tracing the line of anticlimax through the various paltry plagiarisms from Sidney's "Arcadia" and Greene's "Menaphon," which commenced with Day's "Isle of Gulls" (1605) and ended with the flotsam and jetsam published after the Restoration or left to moulder in manuscript.[1]

The Italian pastoral drama of such writers as Tasso and Guarini was, during the strict Elizabethan period, far less important as a dramatic source than the prose romance. The Italian dramatic pastoral is variously

[1] An excellent discussion of this subject will be found in W. W. Greg's *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama.*

reckoned to date from the appearance of the "Favola d'Orfeo" of Agnolo Poliziano, acted at the Mantuan court in 1471, and from Agostino Beccari's stricter representative of the type in "Il Sacrifizio," first produced at Ferrara in 1554. The full possibilities of the species were manifested in the "Aminta," written in 1572–1573 by Torquato Tasso, then twenty-eight years of age, and printed in 1581. An English translation by Abraham Fraunce was published in "The Countess of Pembroke's Ivy-Church" a decade later (1591). The chief rival of Tasso in this branch of art was a fellow courtier, Battista Guarini, whose "Pastor Fido" appeared in 1590, having been completed and probably acted in 1585. In 1591, this play and the "Aminta" were both published in the original Italian by John Wolfe for the benefit of London readers, and in 1602 an English version of the former was dedicated by an unknown translator to Sir Edward Dymock.

The "Pastor Fido" is a much longer, more complex, and even more artificial production than Tasso's "Aminta"; and it must be regarded as considerably inferior to the latter, though its elaborate development of the machinery of mistaken identity, mysterious prophecy, and laws and counter-laws against lovers made it for later writers a sort of compendium and model of pastoral intrigue. The execution of the "Aminta" is simple and beautiful. There is little true dramatic action, and the characters are conceived in the silly and prurient tone of the Latin "golden age" tradition. However, Tasso's piece is saved from coarseness by its grace and from mawkishness by the presence of a true and delicate sense of humor. The final chorus of the play, which I quote in Leigh Hunt's admirable

translation, repeats with almost the gracious irony of Chaucer himself the touch by which that master of raillery tempers the excess of sentiment in his "Clerk's Tale": —

> "I know not whether all the bitter toil,
> With which this lover to his purpose kept,
> And served, and loved, and sighed, and wept,
> Can give a perfect taste
> To any sweet soever at the last:
> But if indeed the joy
> Come dearer from annoy,
> I ask not, Love, for my delight
> To reach that beatific height:
> Let others have that perfect cup:
> Me let my mistress gather up
> To the heart where I would cling,
> After short petitioning." [1]

It may possibly be debated whether the earliest English examples of pastoral comedy, plays of Latin influence like "Gallathea" and "The Arraignment of Paris," owe a subsidiary debt to Tasso. In any case they cannot owe a great deal. The general introduction of the Italian pastoral play — always a courtly type — was due to the same group of literary exquisites who attempted the establishment of another aristocratic species in their imitations of Garnier's tragedy. The translation of the "Aminta" in a volume inscribed to the Countess of Pembroke has been mentioned, and the first original English experiments in the same genre were the work of the most gifted of Lady Pembroke's followers, Samuel Daniel. All of these comedies fall without the limits of Elizabeth's reign, and few of them deserve on their own account more than passing

[1] *Amyntas, A Tale of the Woods*, trans. Leigh Hunt.

notice. Daniel's first effort in the pastoral style was published in 1606 with the title: "The Queenes Arcadia, A Pastorall Trage-comedie presented to her Maiestie and her Ladies, by the Vniuersitie of Oxford in Christs Church, in August last, 1605." The play deals in a somewhat original, if cumbrous, way with the disorder produced in an Arcadian shepherd community by the wiles of two types of worldly corruption, Colax and Techne. With the usual pastoral machinery is combined some not quite contemptible Jonsonian comedy, notably in the speeches of Dr. Alcon, the Quacksalver, who addresses the shepherdess Daphne in the following travesty of medical and alchemistic language: —

> "Welcome, faire nimph, come let me try your pulse.
> I cannot blame you t' hold your selfe not well.
> Something amiss, quoth you, here 's all amiss,
> Th' whole Fabrick of your selfe distempered is,
> The Systole, and Dyastole of your pulse,
> Do shew your passions most hystericall.
> It seemes you haue not very careful bene
> T' observe the prophilactick regiment
> Of your own body, so that we must now
> Descend vnto the Therapeutical
> That so we may preuent the syndrome
> Of symtomes, and may afterwards apply
> Some analepticall Elexipharmacum,
> That may be proper for your maladie."

Daniel's second and last effort in emulation of the Italian pastoral play is "Hymen's Triumph," acted at court in 1614, and published in the following year. This work, considerably simpler and more original than the former, brings us well into the middle of the Jacobean period and directs the attention to the more independent shepherd plays of this epoch. Of the last, only

two justify mention here as obvious survivals of an earlier spirit. In "The Faithful Shepherdess" (1609), Fletcher has reproduced the thin and bloodless pastoral world of Guarini with a freshness which gives the play much of the delicacy, though nothing of the sweet charm, of the Elizabethan romantic comedies. In his beautiful fragment of "The Sad Shepherd" Ben Jonson has proposed with a Titanic daring, which piques the curiosity and again suggests the warmer earlier era, to blend the abstract types of Italian pastoralism with the red-blood figures of Robin Hood romance. Jonson's torso, however, is more in the nature of an untried enterprise than a dramatic achievement; and it must always, perhaps, have shown more kinship with the masque than with convincing human drama. "The Faithful Shepherdess," for all its beauty, was a notorious failure; and lacking warmth of feeling as it does, would be so on any stage. The other plays of the same type, not infrequent in the first two Stuart reigns, are one and all devoid of dramatic life. They are the hard and cold crystallizations from a gradually petrifying drama of that fervent ideality which informed all the most characteristic Elizabethan works, and produced, not merely the distinctively romantic comedies, but also the charming shepherd scenes scattered like oases in the midst of plays otherwise filled with the crash of matter and the wreck of worlds.

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CHAPTER IX

THE HISTORY PLAY

CERTAIN peculiar conditions of popular taste and theatrical expediency during the last dozen years of the sixteenth century resulted in the evolution by the side of the two regular branches of dramatic poetry of a third species, recognized in the tripartite division on the title-page of the 1623 Shakespeare, "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies," and always since respected in the criticism of the drama of this period. The term "history play" is difficult of precise theoretic limitation; and, in practice, the differentiation of the strict members of this new type from those plays on historical subjects which follow the more conservative rules of comedy or tragedy is a task approaching impossibility. Works such as the two parts of "Henry IV" and the "Henry V" of Shakespeare prove sufficiently the right of the history play to consideration as an independent literary form. Yet it is quite impossible to exclude from such consideration other plays which accord wholly, like "Richard III," or almost wholly, like "Richard II," with the strictest rules of tragedy; while any ambitious discussion of the genre, unless based on sane definitions, is in danger of losing itself hopelessly in the attempt to follow such quasi-historical will-o'-the-wisps as "George a Greene" and "James IV." The collective treatment of all Elizabethan plays which happen to present historical figures may perhaps have a curious interest, but is hardly more

susceptible of critical justification or more explanatory of actual facts than would be a grouping based on the locality of the play's action or the nationality of its hero.

Any adequate understanding of the class of history plays seems to require the clear recognition of two preliminary facts: first, that many of the finest historical dramas may possess either not at all or only in small degree the irregularities of structure and tone which mark the class as a whole for separate discussion; and, second, that these special Elizabethan irregularities may manifest themselves in the treatment of foreign as well as native history. There are, for example, a number of points of view from which Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" and "Massacre at Paris" illustrate better than the same poet's "Edward II" what is really significant in the Elizabethan interpretation and dramatic presentation of history.

The especial vogue of the history play during the last years of Elizabeth has been referred in the first sentence above to two causes: an unusual public interest in the matters treated in such plays; and particular stage conditions which toward the close of the century greatly stimulated the demand for dramas constructed on the loose and facile pattern usual to this type. Two of the most potent factors in the Elizabethan literary revival were the high development of national consciousness and the correlative growth of interest in foreign political history. Concurrently, there evolved during the course of the century a patriotic feeling of national solidarity and a lively realization of that outer world in which England as a world power must play her part. Thus, as we trace the steady rise of English national

consciousness, we can trace also the increase in the value set upon foreign travel and the mastery of foreign tongues, and the growing skill in observing and sketching the predominant traits of other peoples.[1] The bibliographical evidence for this double trend of popular interest lies in the fact that such books as the Chronicles of Holinshed, Hall, and Stow, Lord Berners's translation of Froissart, the versified biographies of "The Mirror for Magistrates," and North's translation of Plutarch's Lives rank among the costliest, most elaborate, and most broadly disseminated productions of the Tudor press. Subjects like the progress of the Ottoman Empire, the careers of the great Tartar conquerors, Tamerlane and Genghiz Khan, and the recent history of France and Italy were treated in such an infinity of versions that it is frequently a matter of the greatest difficulty to ascertain the particular source to which the Elizabethan poet resorted. Furthermore, the registers of the Stationers' Company and the catalogues of old libraries teem with the titles of prose tracts and ballad broadsides issued incessantly for the purpose of keeping the masses of the people *au fait* with the latest political developments and accidents of Europe. The deep excitement and triumphant exhilaration of the Armada year (1588) brought into a definite stream these eddying currents of national and cosmopolitan feeling, and had the effect of endowing the actualities of historic incident and character — particularly when they had an English application — with an attractive

[1] For illustrations of the interest felt in the comparison of national peculiarities, see *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, III, iii, 68–85; Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, part ii (ed. 1851, 126); *Merchant of Venice*, I, ii.

power which for some years made the vulgar public eagerly willing to condone any artistic irregularity in the mode of their presentment.

It chanced that the period of greatest general interest in the narratives of history coincided with an era of extreme difficulty for playwrights and theatre managers. The sudden increase in the number of theatres between 1590 and 1600,[1] and the necessity of satisfying a practically unlimited public from the resources of an art which had only just adapted itself to local conditions, produced an abnormal demand for new plays which continually threatened to outrun the possible supply. The diary of Philip Henslowe, manager of a theatrical company which acted usually in competition with that of Shakespeare, shows how the dramatic shortage, incident largely to the very brief runs of the day, was awkwardly met by the employment of a number of literary hacks upon the hasty completion of a single play. Under such unpromising conditions, to which the better managed company of Shakespeare and Burbage seems comparatively seldom to have had recourse, little could be hoped in the way either of structural homogeneity or imaginative content. It was necessary to select a theme which possessed an inherent popular interest and which would admit of piecemeal treatment. The dramatization of history was generally found the readiest and most acceptable field for such rapid improvisation. The great majority of recorded

[1] The *Rose* Theatre is first mentioned as in use in 1592, though it may have been constructed as early as 1587. (Cf. W. W. Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, ii, 44 ff.) The *Swan* and *Blackfriars* were occupied about 1596. The *Globe* was built in 1599, the *Fortune* in 1600; and a private theatre, like that at Blackfriars, was opened by a boys' company at St. Paul's in 1599.

history plays, extant and lost, were produced for performance by the companies of Henslowe; and of the entire number preserved relatively few, except those of Marlowe and of the mature Shakespeare, escape entirely the faults incident to divided authorship and ill-digested plot.

At least twenty of the plays on English and French history known to have been acted by Henslowe's companies have perished or exist only as incorporated in later works; and there seems little reason to doubt that they were justly abandoned to oblivion. The species as a whole was a plebeian growth, fostered by unpolished and irregular stage conditions, bound to few if any of the rules of art, and often seeking applause solely by motley spectacular effect. Plays like "The Wars of Henry I," "Pierce of Exton," "The Funeral of Richard Cœur de Lion," the two parts each of "Earl Godwin" and "Sir John Oldcastle," and the three parts of "The Civil Wars of France," all compiled, as "Henslowe's Diary" shows, during the years 1598 and 1599, by the united labor of from two to five of his regular henchmen,[1] were clearly little more than hasty dishonest efforts to stay temporarily the popular dramatic appetite. It is probable that fate has done ample justice to the species in preserving a single example out of the number cited.[2] But the widespread serious interest in the march of history, which Henslowe thus exploited for the sake of varied and sensational entertainment, responded to more reverent treatment and bore far riper fruit.

"Tamburlaine" is, more than any other drama, the

[1] *I. e.*, Chettle, Dekker, Wilson, Drayton, Munday, and Hathway.

[2] Namely, *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, published in 1600.

source and original of the Elizabethan history play. Earlier English works can hardly be said to exert any permanent influence upon the type or to come within its limits. Bale's "King John" is a controversial morality, reinforced by historical application; "Ferrex and Porrex," "The Misfortunes of Arthur," and "Locrine" are all excluded, not because they present mythical events, — for such discrimination is quite alien to the Elizabethan conception of history and to the procedure of Holinshed and the authors of the "Mirror for Magistrates," — but because their treatment is a mere reflection of classic practice in the Roman tragedy or *fabula prætexta*.

Marlowe's imaginative handling of his historical sources in the first part of "Tamburlaine" and the picture which the entire work paints of warlike ambition and royal magnificence, did much to fix the tone of the species, and proved the direct inspiration of several of the most notable examples. The addition of the second part to this play doubtless suggested the all but universal practice of extending the short stage life of any popular dramatization of history by easily concocted continuations bearing the same name but often manifesting little real affinity. One of the earliest of the extant plays on English history, "The Troublesome Reign of John King of England," printed in 1591 as acted by the Queen's Players, refers pointedly in its prologue to Marlowe's tragedy: —

> "You that with friendly grace of smoothed brow
> Haue entertaind the Scythian Tamburlaine,
> And given applause vnto an Infidel:
> Vouchsafe to welcome (with like curtesie);
> A warlike Christian and your Countreyman."

The contrast thus challenged is, however, only superficial, and results to the crushing disadvantage of the later work. The two parts of "King John" imitate the two parts of "Tamburlaine" merely in so far as they present a series of battles, conspiracies, and escapes ranging over a number of years.

The infinite diversity of the late sixteenth-century history plays can best be rendered capable of orderly treatment by distributing the extant specimens among five fairly distinct, though not mutually exclusive, classes:

First. Plays of mixed type, relatively early for the most part, and generally characterized by artistic uncertainty.

Second. Biographical dramas: collections of ill-unified scenes presenting various incidents in the life of some famous character.

Third. Histories of tragic type: plays which demand no exemption from the conservative dramatic rules, but produce the effect of regular tragedy by means not strikingly irregular.

Fourth. Plays *par excellence* of national feeling or national philosophy, where the normal interest in *dramatis personæ* is more or less absorbed either in the expression of patriotic sentiment or in the interpretation of problems of government and statecraft. It is this class which gives to the Elizabethan history play its individuality as a dramatic species.

Fifth. Romanticized treatments of history, in which the admixture of fact possesses no real significance and deserves no special attention.

To the first of these groups belong apparently nearly all of the lost plays mentioned by Henslowe, except those which are referable to the biographical class. The

same group includes also most of what seem to be the earliest extant attempts at dramatizing history subsequent to "Tamburlaine": "The Troublesome Reign of John," already mentioned; "The Famous Victories of Henry V"; "The Life and Death of Jack Straw"; "The True Tragedy of Richard III"; Lodge's "Wounds of Civil War"; Marlowe's "Massacre at Paris"; the Henry VI plays; and perhaps also Peele's "Battle of Alcazar." Common features of these dramas are the absence of a central theme, the rough presentation of the conspicuous events of many years without any effort to inform them with continuous purpose or historic perspective, and the infusion of extraneous comic matter ranging from the elaborate buffoonery of "The Famous Victories" to the grisly jokes over the dead Admiral's body and the morbid double meanings of the soldier's soliloquy before killing Mugeroun.[1] The mingling of comic burlesque with the serious business of tragedy was a special vice of the time, which Shakespeare's practice only later transmuted into a virtue; and the excision by the printer of "Tamburlaine" of the unworthy farcical passages "of some vaine conceited fondlings greatly gaped at what time they were shewed vpon the stage" has not wholly freed even that work from indecorous mirth.

The plays on King John and Henry V have a particular interest as the sources in large measure of dramas by Shakespeare. It is in the latter poet's concern with history plays as collaborator, reviser, and innovator that the student of Shakespeare finds the clearest indications of the lines along which his early dramatic training proceeded. [Shakespeare's "King

[1] *Massacre at Paris*, ll. 487 ff, 812 ff.

John" occupies a middle position in date and in poetic independence between the Henry VI plays and those that treat Henry IV and Henry V. From "The Troublesome Reign of John," written for the most part in very tolerable blank verse, Shakespeare derived the entire subject matter for his dramatization of the same reign, the two parts of the original work being so condensed that the end of Part I coincides with the close of Act IV, scene 2 of the later play. In marked contrast with his more diffident handling of the Henry VI dramas, Shakespeare here retains practically nothing of the language of his source. He manifests a mature appreciation of character, moreover, in the skill with which he vivifies the only remarkable figure in the old play, that of the Bastard Philip, and heightens into personages of the first dramatic importance the commonplace original conceptions of Arthur, Constance, John, and Hubert. Everywhere, however, the structure of the old play is visible behind the new work. All Shakespeare's *dramatis personæ* are taken from the "Troublesome Reign," with the single exception of Lady Falconbridge's servant, James Gurney, who speaks precisely four words of the first scene.

Apart from the improvements already noted, Shakespeare's changes are relatively slight and not inevitably happy. He retains the absurd identification of the Viscount of Limoges with the Archduke of Austria, but so reduces the part of that actor that his previous concern in the death of Richard I, his possession of the "lion's hide," and Philip's consequent hostility are barely intelligible. The desire for compression is further responsible for the practical sacrifice of the most striking scene of the old play — that in which Philip confronts

his mother — and for the omission of the comic portions depicting the vices of monasticism. The same cause and the clearer realization of John's wily, cowardly, and selfish nature account for the absence of the scenes in which the earlier poet, following independently the line of Bale's "King John," portrays the king as the heroic but defeated champion of English liberty against an encroaching papistry. What Shakespeare's play gains by this last change in the convincing presentation of John's character it loses to a large extent by leaving his murder at the hands of the monks of Swinstead unmotivated and only casually portrayed.

Upon the whole, Shakespeare's "King John" belongs, like the other play, to the experimental period of historic drama. It portrays a succession of political events by means of scenes still inconsecutive and often incongruous, substituting matches of declamatory braggadocio for the realistic presentation of battle, and explaining policies of state as the mere accidents of individual whim. The touch of genius is present in the language, in the delineation of the main characters, and in several fine emotional scenes; but the work lacks the realization of the dignity of history and the comprehensive unity of structure which mark the great and permanently successful history plays.

"The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: Containing the Honorable Battle of Agincourt" is a drama of considerably less merit than "The Troublesome Reign of John," and it may perhaps be ascribed to an earlier date. The only extant sixteenth-century edition, published in 1598,[1] gives a text concerning much

[1] The play was licensed for publication in 1594, and may have been printed in that year. A later edition appeared in 1617.

of which it is difficult to decide whether prose has been misprinted as verse or whether verse has been altogether corrupted into prose. The earlier scenes deal mainly with the thieving exploits and humors of the young prince with his followers, Ned and Tom, and Falstaff's pale progenitor, Sir John Oldcastle or "Jockey," furnishing thus the bare suggestion for such parts of the Henry IV plays as do not concern the rising of the Percies. The later portion of the "Famous Victories" stands in a similar relation to "Henry V," portraying the consequences of the dauphin's gift of tennis balls through the battle of Agincourt to the wooing and betrothal of Katharine of France. The play has been attributed on conjectural evidence to the authorship of the famous comedian Richard Tarleton, who died in 1588; and it was undoubtedly composed with particular attention to the interests of a comic actor. The humor, however, though quite disproportioned in quantity to the serious historical matter, is generally of a poor sort and often degenerates into mere horse-play.

The most striking scene of the "Famous Victories" — that which dramatizes Holinshed's account of the meeting between the turbulent prince and the chief justice — furnished Shakespeare merely with a couple of suggestions for the second part of "Henry IV"; but elsewhere the relationship is more essential, and constitutes the only serious claim of the old play upon the reader's patience. A complete object lesson in the development of the "history" from its rudiments to maturity is furnished by a comparison of the tangled, ineffective plot of the "Famous Victories" with the three plays which at the height of his perfection in this

style Shakespeare constructed out of the same material. With the leisurely assurance of conscious art, the later poet devotes an entire trilogy to the development of the theme, so falteringly outlined by his predecessor, of the prince's relation to his youthful companions, his father, and his country. The puerile comic efforts of the "Victories" are sorted, selected, raised to the highest poetic and imaginative power, and then woven into the patriotic political fabric, till the complementary strains of realistic humor and historic ideality stand out as two in one like the mind and soul respectively of the living drama. The motley farcical scraps, with which the "Famous Victories" is largely pieced together, produced, when expanded and interpreted by Shakespeare, not only the group of robbery scenes in the first part of "Henry IV," but the impressment scenes in the second part as well, and the first suggestion for Pistol's experiences in the wars.[1]

"The True Tragedy of Richard the Third" was first published in 1594, as acted by the Queen's Players, the same company by which "The Troublesome Reign of John" and "The Famous Victories of Henry V" are known to have been performed. No direct connection can be established between this blundering effort of antiquated dramaturgy and Shakespeare's "Richard III"; nor does there seem plausible reason for supposing that the "True Tragedy" was intended in any way as a continuation of the Henry VI plays. Composed in a rude mixture of prose, riming hep-

[1] The scenes depicting Falstaff's levying of soldiers are, of course, elaborated by Shakespeare with much personal reminiscence, but the first suggestion doubtless came from the impressment of John Cobbler and Derrick, in the old play.

tameters of the transitional pattern, and rough blank verse, the work shows everywhere in the development of its plot as well a backwardness which would naturally relegate it to the pre-"Tamburlaine" era, though the allusions to the Armada and to other political events make it certain that in point of actual date it follows that play. An opening Latin couplet in which the ghost of Clarence denounces blood and vengeance after the old Senecan manner, is followed by an induction in which Truth and Poetry announce the subject and explain the state of affairs. The presentation of history is of the roughest description. Individualization of character is almost wholly lacking, and critical purpose appears neither in the selection nor in the handling of events. Even the magnificent opportunity of the battle of Bosworth is largely frittered away, and Richard dies somewhat tamely after fifteen lines of dull soliloquy in prose. Comic relief in the proper sense does not exist, though something of the sort has been clumsily attempted by the interpolation of scenes depicting the sufferings of Mistress Shore and the moralizing of Richard's page, — scenes altogether out of keeping with the rest of the drama. The following lines from a speech of Richard illustrate the Senecan method of the author and exemplify his highest achievement in blank verse, while they suggest at once a contrast with Shakespeare's development of the same idea which measures well the difference between the two writers: —

> "The hell of life that hangs vpon the Crowne,
> The daily cares, the nightly dreames,
> The wretched crewes, the treason of the foe,
> And horror of my bloodie practice past,

Strikes such a terror to my wounded conscience,
That sleep I, wake I, or whatsoeuer I do,
Meethinkes their ghoasts comes gaping for reuenge,
Whom I haue slaine in reaching for a Crowne.
Clarence complaines, and crieth for reuenge.
My nephues bloods, Reuenge, reuenge, doth crie.
The headlesse Peeres come preasing for reuenge.
And euery one cries, let the tyrant die.
The Sunne by day shines hotely for reuenge.
The Moone by night eclipseth for reuenge.
The stars are turned to Comets for reuenge.
The Planets chaunge their courses for reuenge.
The birds sing not, but sorrow for reuenge.
The silly lambes sits bleating for reuenge.
The screeking Rauen sits croking for reuenge.
Whole herds of beasts comes bellowing for reuenge.
And all, yea all the world I thinke,
Cries for reuenge, and nothing but reuenge.
But to conclude, I haue deserued reuenge."

Resemblances of style between this passage and "Locrine" have been adduced as evidence of the common authorship of the two plays; and though the particular contention remains entirely unestablished, there seems no doubt that "The True Tragedy of Richard III" belongs in spirit to the period of critical uncertainty and formlessness which "Locrine" illustrates.

To much the same type of early chronicle play belong a number of contemporary dramatizations of recent foreign history, most of which contain clear evidence of the influence of "Tamburlaine." Several of them, indeed, treat incidents in the Turkish history which Marlowe's play first popularized on the stage. Among such dramas must be mentioned: Peele's "Battle of Alcazar" (1594); the biographical treatment

of the same subject, likewise performed by the Lord Admiral's Men, and published in 1605 as "The Famous History of the life and death of Captain Thomas Stukely"; also "The Tragical Reign of Selimus, sometime Emperor of the Turks" (1594), perhaps written by Robert Greene;[1] and two plays by Marlowe, — the hasty "Massacre at Paris" and the very imaginative treatment of Turkish relations with Malta and Cyprus in "The Jew of Malta."

"The Battle of Alcazar" and "Selimus" are formed on much the same early pattern as "The True Tragedy of Richard III," though both possess higher poetic value; and "Selimus" is connected with "Locrine" by a similarity which only the closest imitation or partial community of authorship will explain.[2] "The Battle of Alcazar" lacks the comic element usual to the class and copiously present in "Selimus." In the devices of the Presenter, the dumb-shows, and "three ghosts crying 'vindicta,'" the former play follows the most primitive models of its kind; while the peculiar tone of its lyric verse, which gives it its chief poetic value and renders Peele's authorship to my mind nearly indisputable, deprives it almost wholly of historic verisimilitude. "The Battle of Alcazar" and many other plays of its decade, though really called forth by the success of "Tamburlaine," failed entirely

[1] Greene's authorship of *Selimus* is still very doubtful. The main evidence in its favor is the quotation of several extracts from the play over R. Greene's name in *England's Parnassus* (1600). See Hugo Gilbert's valuable dissertation, *Robert Greene's Selimus*, Kiel, 1899; and on the other side the introductions to the editions of Greene by J. C. Collins and T. H. Dickinson.

[2] The former alternative is much the more likely. It seems clear that *Locrine* is the earlier of the two plays.

to utilize the new dramatic discoveries in plot and character and harked back to older methods. Yet Peele's figure of the villain Moor, Muly Mahamet, is undoubtedly an awkward essay in Marlowe's early manner; while the particular scene — the most notable in the play — in which that character appears "with lion's flesh upon his sword," and rings the changes on the theme, "Feed then and faint not, fair Calipolis," is the closest parody, as Shakespeare recognized, of the "Tamburlaine" heroics.[1]

Thomas Lodge's "Wounds of Civil War, Lively set forth in the True Tragedies of Marius and Sylla" was acted by the Lord Admiral's Company at a period not definitely determined, and was published in the same year with "The Battle of Alcazar" and "Selimus" (1594). Lodge's play is interesting as offering probably the earliest example of the use of Plutarchan material on the English stage; but it does not anywhere exhibit the slightest recognition of the rare tragic opportunity which later writers were to find in the Lives. In "The Wounds of Civil War," a large quantity of careful and not unmelodious blank verse is rendered totally ineffective by formlessness of plot and psychological poverty. Bloodshed and violent declamation abound, of course; but there appears no trace of fundamental unity or artistic premeditation in the handling either of action or of character. Equally devoid of historic sense and structural ability are Marlowe's synopsis of French history during the seventeen years immediately past (1572–1589) in "The

[1] See Pistol's ravings in 2 *Henry IV*, II, iv. Cf. also Tucca in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, ed. 1873, I, 230, "Feede and be fat, my faire Calipolis."

Massacre at Paris" and the same poet's disjointed treatment of events largely mythical or distorted in "The Jew of Malta."

Far the most important of the early unmethodized history plays are, on many accounts, the dramas which deal with the reign of King Henry VI. In these plays, which happen to illustrate Shakespeare's earliest connection with the species, there appears the first faint conception of a great continuous purpose and a universal lesson behind the blind accidents and spectacular horrors of history. The three parts form in their revised state a single drama, proceeding coherently from the exposition of the discord and incapacity of Henry VI's early reign to the final bloody death with which that weak sovereign pays the penalty of his incompetence. The trilogy must be viewed as a whole to perceive the central principle that glimmeringly informs it; but when so viewed that principle becomes evident beneath the vast tangle of miscellaneous scenes. It is the doctrine — inherent in Elizabethan patriotism, and far more strongly enunciated in the Richard II–Bolingbroke plays, in "Julius Cæsar," and even in Marlowe's "Edward II" — of the essential inconvertibility of the politic and moral virtues, and the futility of attempting to pay off the great debt which the governor owes the governed with the small coin of personal piety or occasional generosity.

"King Henry VI, Part I," first printed in the 1623 Shakespeare, was acted with great success by Lord Strange's company, sixteen performances being recorded by Henslowe for the period extending from March 3, 1592, to January 31 of the following year. The company was that of Shakespeare, with which

Henslowe had at this time a transient connection; and the play acted was probably the extant amplification by Shakespeare of an earlier version. Since the original text has not been preserved, it is impossible to gauge precisely the extent of the reviser's alterations; but it is conventional to consider the scene in the Temple Gardens (II, iv), those presenting Talbot's death (IV, ii-vii), and the interview beween Suffolk and Margaret in V, iii, as largely Shakespeare's independent invention; while the general polish and homogeneity of style suggest the conscientious line by line correction which can be proved for the second and third parts of the play.

In its general scope the first part of "Henry VI" belongs to the most artless form of history play. Events covering a period of thirty-one years are presented without regard for details of fact or chronological sequence. Dramatic unity is defeated by the over-ambitious attempt to develop side by side the three separate themes of the wars in France, the controversy between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester, and the quarrel of York and Somerset, besides certain purely imaginary romantic episodes like that of Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne. Both in the first and the second part of the play the reader is embarrassed by the difficulty of reconciling his sympathy with the good Duke Humphrey with that aroused for the ambitious York, who, though antagonistic, like Gloucester, to the Beauforts (Winchester and Somerset), yet for his own purposes coöperates partly with Gloucester's enemies, and thus gives a puzzling triangular effect to the action of both plays. Yet efforts at unifying the dramatic threads

are not absent from the first part, as in the imputation of responsibility for Talbot's miscarriage to the mutual recriminations of York and Somerset; while Nash's specific tribute in "Pierce Penniless" (1592) and the immediate flood of imitative dramas show how the play evoked a loftier patriotism and a more serious interest in history than had previously existed.

The second and third parts of "Henry VI" are preserved in three separate versions. The earliest editions of these two plays appeared in 1594 and 1595 respectively, with the following titles: "The first part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall end of the proud Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Iacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorkes first claim Vnto the Crowne — 1594"; and "The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke, as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants — 1595." Both plays were reprinted without noteworthy change in 1600. In 1619, a second, slightly altered, text appeared, the two parts being combined in a single quarto entitled "The Whole Contention betweene the Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke. With the Tragicall ends of the good Duke Humfrey, Richard Duke of Yorke, and King Henrie the sixt. Diuided into two Parts: And newly corrected and enlarged. Written by William Shakespeare, Gent." Finally, the 1623 Shakespeare Folio printed a very largely amplified and carefully

revised text, bringing all the three Henry VI plays for the first time into direct connection, and designating those we are specially considering as the second and third parts in the trilogy.

The relation of these different texts and the precise authorship of each form the subject of the most obscure problem in the textual criticism of Shakespeare. There seems no doubt, however, that the second and third parts of "Henry VI," like the first part, are not original creations, but revisions by Shakespeare during his dramatic novitiate of plays already extant; and there is decisive evidence to show that Christopher Marlowe was the partial author, at least, of the earlier versions. Furthermore, the testimony of style and structure goes far to prove that Shakespeare's final text of the plays, as published by his editors in 1623, antedates 1594;[1] and therefore that the perfect version was in existence, and had presumably been acted, before the appearance of the earliest edition of the imperfect "First Part of the Contention" and "True Tragedy" (1594, 1595). Now, all the circumstances surrounding the publication of the various imperfect texts of the two plays in 1594, 1595, 1600, and 1619 indicate that they were surreptitious undertakings brought out without sanction of the author and without the means of access to the corrected copy. The latter would be jealously guarded by the theatrical company to which it belonged, and some stray copy of the earlier, antiquated text must have formed the basis of all the versions previous to 1623. The 1619

[1] The nature of Greene's allusion in the *Groatsworth of Wit* is such as to make it probable that Shakespeare's revision antedated Greene's death in September, 1592.

text, which first makes claim of Shakespearean authorship, stands intermediate in some respects between that of 1594–1595 and the final version. Though certainly founded in the main upon the same original as the former, it contains a few independent details and a few others which conform in part to the corrected acting version.

The second and third parts of "Henry VI" form in a peculiar degree a single play. Neither part is dramatically sufficient in itself; and it seems clear that each was composed with the other part distinctly in view, and by the same authors. There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare — who carefully revised all the verse, expanded or recast many of the finest speeches, transposed and perhaps even added a few scenes in minor key — altered materially the general structure of the plays, or even effected any such radical change in character as he did, for example, in his treatment of the old play of "King John." Both parts reflect the early naïve conception of history play, lacking all appreciation of dramatic climax and possessing only such general unity as was naturally inherent in their subject matter. The interest of the second part revolves about two centres, Duke Humphrey and York; that of the third follows York as far as the end of the first act, and then divides itself between Edward, Richard, and Warwick. Both plays introduce artlessly a good deal of extraneous material, for no higher purpose, apparently, than the simple ambition to present the audience with every scrap of material which the chronicles afford. Such, for instance, are the passages dealing with the conjuring and punishment of the Duchess of Gloucester and the episodes of

Simpcox and Horner in Part II, and the scene between King Henry and the Keepers in Part III.

The highest dramatic merit of these plays consists in the characterization of Richard, Duke of York; and this figure, which belongs clearly to the earliest version of the work, is incontrovertibly the production of Marlowe. York's character is a repetition, somewhat more sympathetically and amply portrayed, of that of Guise in "The Massacre at Paris," with all Guise's Machiavellian cunning and lofty resolution and with something more of the graceful charm which marks Tamburlaine. This picture Shakespeare altered in no essential, though he expanded many of Marlowe's speeches in such a manner that a comparison of the earliest and latest texts makes it possible to trace with considerable exactitude the reverent yet independent touch with which the later writer filled in the lines of the earlier.

With Guise's long soliloquy near the beginning of the "Massacre" should be compared the first soliloquy of York (*2 Henry VI*, I, i, 214 ff), which I quote from the text of 1594: —

> "Anioy and Maine, both giuen vnto the French,
> Cold newes for me, for I had hope of France,
> Euen as I haue of fertill England,
> A day will come when Yorke shall claime his owne,
> And therefore I will take the Neuels parts,
> And make a show of loue to proud Duke Humphrey:
> And when I spie aduantage, claime the Crovvne,
> For thats the golden marke I seeke to hit;
> Nor shall proud Lancaster vsurpe my right,
> Nor hold the scepter in his childish fist,
> Nor vveare the Diademe vpon his head,
> Whose church-like humours fits not for a Crovvne:
> Then Yorke be still a vvhile till time do serue,

Watch thou, and vvake vvhen others be asleepe,
To prie into the secrets of the state.
Till Henry surfeiting in ioyes of loue,
With his nevv bride, and Englands dear bought queene,
And Humphrey vvith the Peeres be falne at iarres,
Then vvill I raise aloft the milke-vvhite Rose,
With vvhose svveete smell the aire shall be perfumde,
And in my Standard beare the Armes of Yorke,
To graffle vvith the House of Lancaster:
And force perforce, ile make him yeeld the Crovvne,
Whose bookish rule hath puld faire England dovvne."

Throughout, York's character and language show strongly the impress of Marlowe's handling, and his two great penultimate speeches in the first act of the Third Part (I, iv, 111–149, 152–168) prove themselves in sentiment, verse-flow, and verbal reminiscence unmistakable productions of that poet. I quote again the version of the earliest text, that of the 1595 octavo, with which the very slightly altered readings of the final edition can profitably be compared: —

"She wolfe of France, but worse than Wolues of France,
Whose tongue more poison'd [poisons] than the Adders tooth
How ill beseeming is it in thy sexe,
To triumph like an Amazonian trull
Vpon his woes, whom Fortune captiuates?
But that thy face is visardlike, vnchanging,
Made impudent by vse of euill deeds:
I would assaie, proud Queene to make thee blush.
. . . . . .
Thou art as opposite to euerie good,
As the Antipodes are vnto vs,
Or as the south to the Septentrion.
Oh Tygers hart wrapt in a womans hide!
Hovv couldst thou draine the life bloud of the childe,
To bid the father wipe his eies withall,
And yet be seene to beare a womans face?

Women are milde, pittifull, and flexible,
Thou indurate, sterne, rough, remorcelesse.
Bids thou me rage ? why novv thou hast thy vvill.
Wouldst haue me weepe ? why so thou hast thy vvish.
For raging windes blowes vp a storme of teares,
And when the rage alaies the raine begins.
These teares are my sweet Rutlands obsequies,
And euerie drop begs vengeance as it fals,
On thee fell Clifford, and the[e] false French woman.
. . . . . .
That face of his the hungrie Cannibals
Could not haue tucht, would not haue staind with blood.
But you are more inhumane, more inexorable,
O ten times more then Tygers of Arcadia [Hyrcania].
See ruthlesse Queene a haplesse fathers teares.
This cloth thou dipts in bloud of my sweet boy,
And loe with teares I wash the bloud awaie.
Keepe thou the napkin and go boast of that,
And if thou tell the heauie storie well,
Vpon my soule the hearers will sheed teares,
I, euen my foes will sheed fast falling teares,
And saie alas, it was a pitteous deed.
Here, take the crowne, and with the crowne my curse,
And in thy need such comfort come to thee,
As now I reape at thy tvvo cruell hands.
Hard-harted Clifford, take me from the world,
My soule to heauen, my bloud vpon your heads.
North. Had he bin slaughterman of all my kin,
I could not chuse but weepe with him to see,
How inlie anger gripes his hart."

Not merely in the portrayal of the most conspicuous figure, but through the entire handling of these plays, the main finger is that of Marlowe, and the finest passages tend rather to glorious declamation than the serious presentation of facts. Typically Marlovian are Suffolk's passionate outburst to the Queen upon his banishment (*2 Henry VI*, III, ii, 308 ff), the Queen's

denunciation of King Henry's weakness (*3 Henry VI*, I, i, 231 ff), and the dying speeches of Warwick (*ibid.*, V, ii). Out of such material so respectfully treated by the reviser it was impossible to achieve dramatic unity or accuracy of impression; and the Henry VI plays remained after Shakespeare's elaboration substantially what they had been before, — rather examples of the utmost poetic capability of the old chaotic "history" than precursors of the new type which Shakespeare was to develop.

The biographical play, the second form in which crude interest in the dramatization of history showed itself, requires little discussion. Extant specimens of the type are: "The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukely" (1605), previously mentioned; "The True Chronicle History of the whole Life and Death of Thomas Lord Cromwell" (1602); "The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle" (1600);[1] and the manuscript play of "Sir Thomas More." But there can be no question that the great majority of such works, copiously suggested by titles preserved in "Henslowe's Diary," perished after they had served the temporary need which produced them. It has been hinted already that the biographical history inherited from the old heroic drama, and continued the tradition established by that type.[2] As higher requirements of plot and character began to drive from the stage the rambling presentation of the adventures of mythical heroes like Sir Clyomon and Huon of Bordeaux, it was found possible still to hold the public ear by treating the lives of real personages in much the same disjointed manner. The very play of "Tamburlaine,"

[1] No second part seems to have been published.

[2] See p. 252.

for example, which on the one hand marks the development of the naïve chivalrous play into a character drama so much higher in tone as to belong to an essentially different and incompatible species, testifies on the other hand to the general interest in historic personality which gave temporary acceptance to even the most banal and formless presentations. It is doubtless no accident that Henslowe's entries indicate an abandonment of plays like "Huon of Bordeaux" (1593), "Godfrey of Bulloigne" (1594), and "Chinon of England" (1596), and an increase in such titles as "Tamar Cam" (1592), "Buckingham" (1593), "Stukely" (1596), "Hardicanute" (1597), "Oldcastle" (1599), "Owen Tudor" (1600), and "Biron" (1602). Of the four extant biographical plays mentioned above, two, "Oldcastle" and "More," are clearly the result of divided authorship. None possesses in any degree unity of conception or treatment; and all depend self-confessedly upon the attractive power of the individual careers presented to compensate for many deficiencies of execution. Of the detached scenes which compose all these works, the most successful, and the most significant historically, are probably those in "Oldcastle," dealing with the conspiracy of Cambridge, Scroope, and Grey, and the admirable portrayal of the Ill May Day riot in "Sir Thomas More," a passage which it may perhaps not be over-credulous to regard as partially the work of Shakespeare's early hand.

The earliest English play to treat the material of history with conscious reverence for the established rules of dramatic composition is Marlowe's "Edward II." [1] In this work, which introduced, if it did not

[1] It may be that this distinction should be shared by Marlowe's

create, the third type of history drama, considerations of temporary popular appeal are for the first time subordinated to the austerer principles of permanent art. The forethought with which Marlowe selected, altered, and condensed the chronicle narratives, till he formed from their various blurred outlines the single consistent picture he desired, was a new thing in dramatized history, and it gives to his play, when contrasted with the motley unreasoned patchwork that surrounded it, the lucidity and restraint of a classic. It may be that a certain inconsequence in the presentation of character conflict, and a tendency to juggle with the springs of emotion, which always disqualifies Marlowe for the judicial impartiality of Shakespeare, cause "Edward II" to fall somewhat short of the highest form of tragedy, — the tragedy of characterization. Yet it is one of the purest instances of the tragedy of circumstance, and it raised the history play to the dignity of permanent literature, inaugurating a new species and creating a public for the great histories of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's first independent history plays, "Richard III" and "Richard II," are composed in marked imitation of the work of Marlowe. "Richard III," written in all probability about 1593, within a year or two of the production of "Edward II," reverts to the earlier structural model of "Tamburlaine" and "Faustus," concentrating attention upon a single imposing figure and rioting in crude melodramatic

Dido, Queen of Carthage, in which Thomas Nash had some vague concern. The subject of Dido, however, is far less seriously historic than that of Edward II; and much obscurity exists in regard to the precise date and origin of the former play.

effect. In certain details, indeed, such as the emphasis laid upon the power of the curse,[1] the insistence on the significance of dreams,[2] and the demoniac figure of Margaret, who follows like an avenging genius the just calamities of the House of York, the play shows itself influenced by the earlier spirit of Senecan tragedy. But, with all its glaring immaturity, "Richard III" exhibits, both in the conception of its hero and in the general conduct of its plot, a fuller tragic promise than "Edward II" had attained. The rough outline of Richard's character — his Machiavellian selfishness and frank confession of villainy — is, of course, the same as that of Marlowe's Guise, Barabas, and Mortimer; but this outline is filled in with the humanizing perception of the highest genius. In his masterly assumption of guilelessness and simple dealing,[3] his attempt at explaining his villainy to himself, his immense delight in his mischievous mental power,[4] and the imperturbable *sang-froid* with which he turns against their authors the curses of Margaret and the suspicions of the Woodvilles, Richard presents a character altogether different from that he bears in the Henry VI plays and suggestive at every point of Shakespeare's greatest triumph in the portrayal of evil genius, — the character of Iago in "Othello." In one respect, indeed, the less mature treatment of Richard is given a turn which invests that figure with the human probability and pathos somewhat lacking in the super-normal Iago. It is the delicate touch

[1] Cf. I, iii, 111 ff; IV, iv; V, i.

[2] I, iv, 9 ff; III, ii, 10 ff; V, iii, 118 ff.

[3] *E. g.*, I, iii, 47 ff; II, i, 60 ff; II, ii, 153; III, iv, 53–55.

[4] I, ii, 228 ff; IV, iv, 431.

which shows the hero's loss at the crisis of the play of his previously invincible self-confidence, as he feels in confusion, though still undaunted, the approach of inevitable doom. The irritable uncertainty of his commands to Catesby when he hears of Richmond's arrival (IV, iv, 440 ff), his sudden suspiciousness of fate and friends (IV, iv, 509 ff; V, iii, 2, 8, 72–74), and the horror and magnificent recovery of the dream scene humanize the figure of Richard and accomplish that tragic pity which Marlowe wins for his Edward by the less dramatic recourse to pure emotionalism.

In structure, also, "Richard III" satisfies the requirements of high tragedy more fully than the riper and richer play of Marlowe. Though the former drama contains but one great protagonist, the battle which he wages against the overwhelming consequences of curse, prophecy, and accumulated crime is so vividly depicted that there is nowhere a trace of incoherence or the least slackening of suspense. "Richard III" is the final achievement in the single-character drama, and it has continued, from the time of Burbage to the present, one of the most fruitful opportunities for the great tragic actor. Its success where other plays of the kind failed of permanent effectiveness results from its conception of the genius of history as an inexorable fate against which the hero maintains a mortal and hopeless combat. "Richard III" must be studied in the closest connection with the Henry VI plays. The latter end with the picture of the complete triumph of the House of York and the prostration of injured Lancaster. "Richard III" has for its great theme the exposition of the punishment of the offenders at each

other's hands, and the establishment of predestined right in the fulfilment of Henry's prophecy concerning Richmond's reign (*3 Henry VI*, IV, vi, 68 ff) and the union of the roses. In spirit and purpose this play is probably the closest parallel in English literature to the tragedy of Æschylus.

"King Richard II," composed probably a year later than "Richard III," differs very greatly from that play, and though it marks an advance in dramatic capability, must be reckoned individually a less powerful tragedy. "Richard III" ends a tetralogy dealing with selfish ambition and civil strife; "Richard II" begins another series of four plays in which Shakespeare treats primarily questions of good government and national patriotism. The latter work was most unmistakably suggested by "Edward II," although perhaps not properly an imitation; and the decision concerning the respective merits of the two plays is a matter of some delicacy. "Edward II" is far more mature, and, on the whole, doubtless a finer drama. Much of "Richard II" is lacking in vigor. The two challenge scenes (I, i; IV, i, 1–106) and that which deals with the interrupted tournament (I, iii) read almost like flashy imitations of Sir Walter Scott: they have no dignity and they do not discriminate character. The introduction of Aumerle's conspiracy is an otiose offence against the laws of tragic compression, and some of Richard's long speeches exceed in vapidity what the spectator will patiently endure from even a confessedly weak hero. These are the defects of youth, embarrassed in the handling of a new style, and they find no parallel in the careful restraint of "Edward II." The special merit of Shakespeare's

play consists, as has been pointed out,[1] in the substitution of a single well-defined conflict between the king and Bolingbroke instead of the constantly changing bickerings of "Edward II," and in the clear demonstration of the poet's theory of royal responsibility. These features both make for structural unity and argue the existence of tragic capacity considerably in excess of the actual performance of the play.

The most interesting thing about "Richard II" is the character of Richard. The poetic irresolution and tendency to masquerade like a player king in his royal dignity were not peculiarities of the true Richard as Holinshed portrays him; and the stress upon these qualities so far obscures the tyranny, improvidence, and violence of the historical personage that the wild energy of the death scene appears positively out of keeping. Of all Shakespeare's monarchs, Richard II is the only one whose kingship seems painted and artificial. From the first scene he speaks and thinks less like the born sovereign than the enthroned *parvenu*, making garish show of the supremacy which he should take for granted; and it sometimes looks almost as if Shakespeare were unjustly travestying Marlowe's treatment of the weak but always royal Edward. The truth probably is that both Richard and Bolingbroke are rather sketches of the two mental types which Shakespeare recognized within himself than serious portraits of historic figures. If we except Hamlet, as we should do, Richard is Shakespeare's last example, not wholly unfavorable, of that type of intellectual trifler who loses sight of truth and justice in the cult of felicitous novelty; and his

[1] See p. 251.

> "Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
> Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,
> Figures pedantical,"

have an identical nature and origin with those which the young Shakespeare was continually renouncing through the mouth of Biron and others, and continually yielding to again. It is this turn of mind, strikingly illustrated in the ridiculous conceits of the abdication scene and the king's last soliloquy, to which the poet unhistorically ascribes Richard's fall; while in the successful Bolingbroke he emphasizes the corresponding virtues of prompt practical decision and freedom from whimsicality. The story of Shakespeare's life may perhaps testify to the ultimate preponderance of the latter attitude, and his work, I believe, shows his final leaning toward the type of Bolingbroke.[1]

A roughly contemporary example of tragedy constructed from historical material is preserved in an untitled British Museum manuscript, which has been twice printed and which is often referred to as "The Tragedy of Woodstock." This play deals with the reign of Richard II, and offers an interesting contrast to Shakespeare's treatment of the same theme. The principal figure is the king's uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester; and the tragedy ends with the circumstances immediately consequent upon the murder of that personage in 1397, — precisely the point at which Shakespeare's play begins. The events of fifteen years are boldly and skillfully shifted with a view to the dramatic presentation of the struggle which the humorous and patriotic old hero wages

[1] See, however, in opposition to this view the admirably expressed argument of W. B. Yeats in *Ideas of Good and Evil*, 152 ff.

against the rash extravagance of the king and the destructive rapacity of his favorites. The picture of Richard's wild, improvident self-indulgence is very much truer to the real character than is that of the poetic royal dilettante whom Shakespeare paints. Moreover, the unknown author of this play has strongly portrayed in the elevation of Tresillian, Bushy, Bagot, and Greene, in the crushing tyranny of the blank charters, the farming out of England, and the murder of Gloucester, real causes of the king's overthrow which it has pleased Shakespeare in his largely imaginary treatment to pass lightly over.

The parallels between "Woodstock" and the plays of "Edward II" and "2 Henry VI," which Keller cites,[1] seem to me to have very little pertinence; but it cannot well be doubted that the former work was influenced by Marlowe's example in its handling of the relation between Richard and his sycophants, the death of Woodstock, and the controversy between the peers and king. The author of "Woodstock" seems, however, to have been a practiced and independent dramatist. His skill in the use of prose and of humorous relief contrasts strikingly with the notable absence of both these elements in "Edward II" and "Richard II"; while his hero, Woodstock, though he never speaks more than passable verse, is in the convincingness and comprehensiveness of his character a more promising tragic figure, probably, than either Marlowe's Edward or Shakespeare's Richard.

Three plays of Shakespeare's full power complete the roll of Elizabethan historical tragedies. "Macbeth,"

[1] See the preface to his edition of the play in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, vol. xxxv (1899).

"Antony and Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus," all produced within comparatively narrow limits of time (1606 ?–1610), are closely bound together by peculiarities of structure and by certain internal reminiscences.[1] In each the historical material furnished by Holinshed and Plutarch respectively has been shaped into a marvellous presentation of the ruin of a great and noble nature by a single besetting and ultimately overwhelming weakness; namely, ambition, unworthy love, and insolent self-assertion. Each of these plays exemplifies tragedy in its purest and highest form, and the tragic effect depends in each case upon the wise interpretation of actual character and historic fact. In "Macbeth," Shakespeare has applied the narrative of Holinshed to the inculcation, in saner and more sympathetic manner, of the same moral of avenging guilt which he had before read in the history of Richard III. In the stories of Antony and Coriolanus, he found his own doctrine of the normal balance of the world, and the necessary punishment of what is eccentric and exorbitant, already nobly stated by Plutarch; and he has been content in these perfect tragedies to follow his historic source with a closeness with which he has followed no other.

To the fourth species of history play belong those dramas which, while not subject to the rules of ordinary tragedy or comedy, yet rise above the level of artless improvisation, and owe their inspiration to a more vital cause than purely melodramatic effectiveness or mere ephemeral appeal. In such plays there is always perceptible behind the individual human actors a back-

[1] Note, for example, the allusions to Plutarch's *Life of Antonius* in *Macbeth*, III, i, 54–57 and V, viii, 1, 2.

ground which presents a philosophic interpretation of history or a general picture of some great epoch. Any technical analysis of these plays will find most of the examples lacking in unity and in dramatic intensity. But when they are interpreted as delineations of History itself rather than historic individuals, the reader has no difficulty in explaining the singleness of aim and effect which he really feels, but which he can hardly account for by any of the regular canons of dramatic art.

Perhaps the earliest representative of the type under discussion is the anonymous "Reign of King Edward the Third," published in 1596 and acted probably several years before. Here the strong current of national feeling, produced by the general agitation which culminated in the defeat of the Armada, and found expression in the patriotic outbursts of "Locrine" (IV, i, 28–43), of Falconbridge in the King John plays, and of John of Gaunt in "Richard II," becomes the main dramatic force in the work. The plot, derived principally from Holinshed's Chronicles of England and Scotland, is totally lacking in dramatic coherence. The introduction of the scenes dealing with the Countess of Salisbury is capable of satisfactory explanation only when we realize the universal popular worship of Edward III as the particular embodiment of England's glory, and the half-pagan reverence which would follow breathlessly the career of the divinity in peace as well as war. The military scenes themselves are quite disjointed in respect of any progressive delineation of character or the untying of any specific dramatic knot. The real subject of the play is not Edward himself or his valiant son, but the national prestige in its steady progress

from Crecy to Poitiers and from Poitiers to the conquest of Calais.[1] So, the great dramatic moments, which thrill the blood and give essential unity to the work, are not revelations of individual personality, but high expressions of patriotic ardor, such as Edward's summons to his warriors after his recovery from his "follies seege against a faithful louer" (II, ii, 201 ff); the knighting and arming of the Black Prince for the wars (III, iii, 172 ff); the magnificent tableau that brings in the prince to his father triumphant after Crecy (III, v, 60 ff); and the effective revulsion of the last scene, which, straight on the news of disaster, gives assurance of unimagined victory and lowers the curtain on the picture of exultant England.

During the last three or four years of the sixteenth century, the type of drama rather adumbrated than exemplified in "Edward III" was developed by Shakespeare into a distinct species and illustrated by four plays composed in close succession: the two parts of "Henry IV," "Henry V," and "Julius Cæsar." The Henry IV and Henry V plays form a closely connected series presenting a well-matured theory of royal responsibility and governmental ethics by means of their picture of the character evolution of a great national leader. It is the figure of the prince, as heir apparent, and as king, that gives unity and purpose to the trilogy — less, indeed, as the conventional dramatic hero who shapes the action, than as the ideal hypothetical type by which Shakespeare illustrates his philosophy of statecraft and kingship.

[1] The sequence of these events as given in the play varies from that of history. The battle of Crecy really occurred in 1346, the surrender of Calais in 1347, the battle of Poitiers not till 1356.

It can scarcely be doubted that the play of "Henry V," regularly announced in the Epilogue to "Henry IV, Part II," was definitely under contemplation when the first part of "Henry IV" was conceived. Indeed, an unnecessary allusion in the last act of "Richard II" (V, iii, 1–22) to the young prince's "dissolute and desperate" character, through which Bolingbroke discerns "some sparks of better hope, which elder years May happily bring forth," makes it probable that the poet was already considering the dramatic portrayal of this figure. It may very reasonably be questioned, however, whether, when Shakespeare undertook, about 1596 or 1597, to follow up his study, in Richard II and Bolingbroke, of two imperfect and antagonistic monarchic types by a delineation of his ideal prince, he had any idea of devoting more than a single play to that prince's preparation for sovereignty and another to his triumphant reign. The second part of "Henry IV," like the second part of "Tamburlaine," seems to be an originally unpremeditated addition, occasioned by the enormous effectiveness of the by-figure of Falstaff. This genial character must have expanded in its development far beyond the limits at first intended for it, and thus necessitated the splitting of the political matter of Henry IV's reign, in itself hardly sufficient for a single drama, into two plays. The result is that the serious historical theme, which certainly represents the poet's primary conception, is continually being threatened with eclipse by the anachronistic comic scenes of sixteenth-century merriment and topical allusion. It is even true that the portrayal of the prince's preparation for government, besides being thus thrust into the background, is actually obscured

by the division. The first play ends abruptly in order to leave scope for the second; yet much of the second part is notwithstanding a mere variation of material already used in the first; and the effect of the two parts when taken together is less that of steady dramatic progress than of march and counter-march. The great scenes, for example, which depict Falstaff's arrest at the suit of Dame Quickly and his impressment of soldiers in Gloucestershire (Part II, II, i; III, ii) are brilliant amplifications of suggestions more hastily and prodigally thrown out in the first part (III, iii, 60–101; IV, ii). Naturally, the tendency to repetition is yet more striking in the historical scenes, where actual scantiness of material could less readily be eked out by imagination. Virtually everything necessary to fit the Henry IV plays for their original purpose as preliminary to a drama on the reign of Henry V is accomplished in the first part. The triumph of the prince's nobler aspirations over the attractions of dissolute company, his reconciliation with his father, and the supreme vindication of his heroic valor in the overthrow of Hotspur are here complete. The play needs only scenes indicating the King's death and the final dismissal of Falstaff to stand forth as we may suspect it was first designed, perfect in itself and a full induction to the treatment of the hero's triumphant reign. As it is, however, the demand for more Falstaff scenes brings the prince back among his old irresistible but unedifying companions with a sudden revulsion which, after the exalted strain on which the first part ends, makes his character appear a little weak. Again he loses his father's confidence, and has this time to regain it by means of declamation rather than action. Mean-

time, the memory of the laurels won from Hotspur at Shrewsbury — an episode intended surely as the prelude which should usher in the wars of France and introduce the conqueror of Agincourt — grows dim through long unmartial acts where the prince appears but seldom, and the reader's attention follows the chicaneries of Northumberland and Prince John or the equally irrelevant knaveries of Falstaff.

There will hardly be found a critic to wish for one play of "Henry IV" instead of two. Falstaff is assuredly as great a favorite with the universal modern public as he seems to have been with Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth. But it is necessary to consider the degree in which this most tremendous of comic figures probably affected Shakespeare's treatment of history, in order to gauge the intention of the political scenes in "Henry IV" and to understand the reason in part also for his abrupt cutting off in the pure history play of "Henry V." Had Falstaff been dealt with as summarily as Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet," the trilogy we are considering would have lost immeasurably in human interest, but surely it would have gained in homogeneity. As matters stand, the student of the individual plays is almost certain, in reading either of the first two, to be diverted from the state of Plantagenet England to Shakespeare's Gloucestershire and the streets of contemporary London. Yet when the entire series is viewed comprehensively, as it should be, it is not difficult to see the lesson which the poet read behind the progress of events, and which he has here intended to enforce. The moral of the three Henry V plays is that which Shakespeare has strongly expressed elsewhere: the responsibility of the ruler

both to his subjects and to higher power. This feeling inspires everywhere Shakespeare's repugnance to anything amateurish in government, whether expressed in the mob-rule of Jack Cade and the Roman rabble or in the anointed incapacity of Richard II. But though he shows clearly that Richard II deserved to fall, he emphasizes no less strongly, in the prophecies of the Bishop of Carlisle and Richard himself, and in the continual misery of the crowned Bolingbroke, that an equal scourge afflicts him who by any indirection seizes the royal burden with him who seeks to escape it. "Henry IV" paints the gradual development in the young prince of the ideals of kingly service, capacity, justice, and patriotic fervor which Shakespeare demanded of the monarch; and "Henry V" is a triumphant finale, to be considered, not separately, but in closest connection with the study in character building which it immediately followed and completed. As "Richard II" and "Henry IV" both demonstrate the punishment of those who trifle with royalty, so this play pictures the enormous possibilities of personal glory and national service within the reach of that ruler who performs unshrinkingly and thoroughly the full duties of justly assumed dominion.

The earliest production of "Henry V" can be assigned to the summer of 1599 by reason of the allusion in the Prologue before the fifth act to the Earl of Essex's absence in Ireland (Apr. 15 – Sept. 28, 1599); and all evidence so far discovered tends to limit the date of "Julius Cæsar" to the same year or that which followed. The latter play is Shakespeare's consummate attempt at presenting under dramatic form a philosophy of history; just as "Macbeth," "Antony and

Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus" remain his most perfect examples of pure historical tragedy. The remoteness of the material treated gives to all these dramas a universal application hardly obtainable in the portrayal of the more immediate past. The main subject of "Julius Cæsar" is not a single figure, whether Cæsar himself or Brutus. It is rather the vindication in the rotten commonwealth of Rome of the constant force of that political Nemesis whose operation in the course of English history Shakespeare had already shown. The play's claim to unity lies in the singleness of purpose with which it enunciates the moral, already exemplified in the career of Bolingbroke, that every effort to achieve law and order by lawless means must end in futility and sorrow. Cæsar, the egoist, and the idealist Brutus perish alike by reason of their rash attack upon the sacred power of authorized government, which in Shakespeare's teaching revenges every attempt at tyrannical or anarchic interference. The grim pathos and irony of this play, one of Shakespeare's greatest and most thoughtful works, lies mainly in the swift inevitable precision with which Brutus after the murder of Cæsar finds himself threatened by the same ideals of governmental order he has so irresponsibly tried to champion. The demagogic Antony and the Roman mob are blind instruments by which a high power pursues Brutus, exactly as through him it had punished Cæsar. Thus, the closing acts of the play have for their main function the development of Brutus's desperate realization that in him and his selfish companions are reproduced all the evils for which Cæsar fell.[1] The ghost that harries Brutus is,

[1] Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, IV, iii, 18 ff.

of course, in no sense the spirit of one unjustly slain, seeking vengeance upon the guilty murderer. Such a conception would totally degrade the character of the hero, and negative that of Cæsar, whom Shakespeare clearly follows Plutarch in holding worthy of death. Rather, the ghost is to be regarded as the embodiment of outraged authority; and Philippi is the scene not of personal revenge, but of the triumph of that supernal law of ordered government which chastises even in morally innocent and noble offenders every movement subversive of the balance of cosmic serenity.

In the play which most immediately followed "Julius Cæsar," in "Hamlet," Shakespeare left the realm of serious history. Here, however, he treated in a mythical subject, and upon dramatic lines already laid down, a not dissimilar problem concerning the violent putting right of a world which has grown out of joint. Many of the hesitations and difficulties of the Prince of Denmark have their origin in the conception of political and personal responsibility which Shakespeare has enunciated in the parallel case of Brutus.

An enormous number of plays on quasi-historical subjects, often bearing the names of actual personages, are in reality mere compilations of traditional or invented romance. Such, for example, are the anonymous "George a Greene" and "Fair Em," Greene's "James IV," and Dekker's "Shoemaker's Holiday." Another instance, ostensibly less irregular, is Peele's "Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First" (1593), a long work distinguished by some fine bursts of undramatic poetry, but absurd in structure and in content. Several of the most extraordinary violations of history and possibility in this play appear to have been

taken from a ballad called "A Warning Piece to England against Pride and Wickedness," in which Edward's queen, Eleanor of Castile, is held up to contemporary prejudice as a pattern of Spanish sin and vindictiveness.[1] Other marvellous episodes are wanton inventions of the poet, and the play lacks little of being, like "James IV," a complete excursus into the province of fiction.

The most popular subjects with the fabricators of pseudo-historical drama appear to have been the tales of pre-Conquest Britain and the much-storied age of Richard I and Robin Hood. The heterogeneous "Knack to Know a Knave" touches lightly upon the legends of King Edgar and Bishop Dunstan. In the anonymous "Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters" and in Shakespeare's "Cymbeline," an admixture of spurious history gives weight and coherence to the romantic scenes upon which both plays mainly depend for their very different degrees of success. Shakespeare's "King Lear" changes the tone of its borrowed material from comedy to tragedy and from romance to realism, without making the historic element in any way more accurate or important. "Nobody and Somebody," an undated play, belonging probably to the beginning of the seventeenth century, blends a realistic comic plot of contemporary interest with "the true Chronicle Historie of Elydure, who was fortunately three several times crowned King of England." So, Middleton's "Mayor of Queenborough"

[1] It may be that the ballad follows the play instead of preceding it. However, the question of priority is not of essential consequence, since both works obviously express a perfectly general attitude of the literature of the day.

and the pseudo-Shakespearean "Birth of Merlin" use the shadowy tissue of pre-Arthurian legend as a background for the scenes of intrigue comedy in which the age of James found its highest amusement. Similar in spirit to the last-mentioned plays, and probably roughly contemporary with them, is R. A(rmin ?)'s "Valiant Welshman" (1615), which likewise adorns the highly colored picture of its hero, Caractacus (Caradoc), with the varied attractions of magical superstition, realistic burlesque, and lurid melodrama.

A different treatment of early English history, shortly subsequent to the Conquest, is found in Dekker's interesting "Satiromastix" (1602). Here the author, after having apparently designed an imaginative tragedy on the subject of William Rufus and Sir Walter Tyrrel, was led by the exigencies of the "War of the Theatres" to give the main story a hasty comic termination, and to interweave a satirical underplot dealing nominally with the Augustan Age at Rome, and really with the no less incongruous literary disputes of the passing moment. Despite the bizarre mingling of three distant ages thus effected, and the total sacrifice of plot unity, "Satiromastix" is still a readable play with genuine comic interest. The one important tragic scene[1] which the drama contains in its present form is also worthy both of Dekker's high reputation for pathos and of the place which Charles Lamb gave it in his "Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets."

English history during the reigns of the Angevin kings had formed the subject, as we have seen, of three chronicle plays of the earliest type in the two parts of

[1] Ed. Scherer, ll. 2081 ff.

the "Troublesome Reign of John" and in Shakespeare's "King John." The same epoch is portrayed, though with much less emphasis upon historic fact, in the two plays of "Robert, Earl of Huntington," of which the earlier certainly belongs rather to romantic comedy than to the historical drama.

The interesting comedy of "Look About You" (1600), treating the later years of Henry II, is clearly illustrative of the history play in the stage of disintegration which we are considering. The choice of title in this work, as well as in "Nobody and Somebody," shows how the pure historical theme was losing attractiveness on the stage of 1600; and the mixed plot testifies alike to an unwillingness to stake the interest of the piece upon the frank presentation of chronicle material. "Look About You" is a lively play, with a superabundance of clever and exciting scenes, hinging usually upon one or another of a great variety of disguise motives. It is, however, far too confused in structure and too irresponsible in purpose to merit the title of a good play on any just analysis. It possesses several points of contact with other plays dealing with the same early Plantagenet period. In its portrait of the page, "Robin Hood, Earl of Huntington," it serves as a prelude to the Huntington dramas of Munday and Chettle; while its treatment of the initial stages in the love affair between Prince Richard and Lady Falconbridge brings it into a like relation to the King John plays. The main significance of "Look About You," as regards the history of the chronicle play, lies, however, in the author's evident recognition of the inadequacy of all these historical subjects to hold the attention of his audience, unless supported

by the extraneous farce and sensationalism which he weaves around the figures of Skink and Gloucester.

"The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green," by Day and Chettle, is a thoroughly entertaining play, which makes very much the same kind of appeal as "Look About You," and stands in the same general relation to the facts of history. These two comedies occupy an intermediate position between the two dramatic classes into which the chronicle play broke, as the type lost its original freshness. In the plays of the first class, illustrated by "James IV" and "George a Greene," the historical matter is essentially unreal and unconvincing. In certain other decadent history plays, however, the authors have found it possible to transfer the chief interest from the great political events and personages to more romantic elements, without absolutely falsifying the history of the period in which they set their plots. It is entirely as imaginary comedies that "Look About You" and "The Blind Beggar" make their appeal. Yet the picture of the troubles between Henry II and his rebellious sons in the one play, and the picture of the French wars of Henry VI and the rivalry between Duke Humphrey and Cardinal Beaufort in the other, are, on the whole, not falsely painted.

Better examples of this type of play, which subordinates history, without entirely distorting it, are Samuel Rowley's "When You See Me, You Know Me, Or the famous Chronicle History of King Henry the Eight" and Dekker's "Whore of Babylon." Rowley gives a vivid sketch of informal life at Henry's court by means of scenes which in themselves are for the most part trivial or even imaginary. Dekker, as his

apocalyptic title indicates, satirizes the Roman Church, by presenting the chief occurrences of Elizabeth's reign in allegorical drapery.

Toward the close of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare's Company staged an occurrence in the foreign history of the previous generation in "A Larum for London, or the Siege of Antwerp." The portrayal of the scenes attending the capture of Antwerp by the Spanish (1576) is reminiscent of the first part of Marlowe's "Massacre at Paris," with which this play even shares one phrase.[1] But the main attention of the author of the "Larum" is fixed less upon history itself than upon two extraneous concerns. With the homiletic intention suggested by the first title, facts are garbled in order to present the Antwerp disaster as a retribution for civic short-sightedness; and a large fictional interest is added in the portrayal of the "ventrous actes and valorous deeds of the lame soldier," — a popular type of the day represented not dissimilarly in the Cavaliero Dick Bowyer of "The Trial of Chivalry" and in Ralph in "The Shoemaker's Holiday."

Probably the fairest instances of the late history play in its shift toward imaginary comedy are the four dramas of Thomas Heywood which deal with the reigns of Edward IV and Elizabeth respectively. Heywood — a prose Shakespeare, as Lamb called him — has the point of view of the novelist rather than the playwright, and in his treatment of history he anticipates strikingly the method of the modern historical

[1] Merely the cry of the Second Spaniard, "Tue tue, tue!" (ed. Simpson, p. 64). Cf. *Massacre at Paris*, l. 340. The use of French in the former case is striking.

romancer. In the two Edward IV plays, the great personages and the important national events of the reign are pushed far into the background, where they serve to set off the presentation of minor figures and of incidents mainly apocryphal. Thus, the important subjects of the work are the adventures of the miller of Tamworth, of Mistress Shore and her abused husband,—all excellently depicted; the trifling episode of Falconbridge's siege of London, and the almost purely imaginary French campaign. The complete absorption of history in fiction is interestingly apparent when we compare these plays, admirable in their way, with Shakespeare's handling of the same period in "3 Henry VI" and "Richard III." To enroll the former works among serious history plays would be as great an impertinence as to catalogue "A Tale of Two Cities" among the histories of the French Revolution.

The two curious plays dealing with Queen Elizabeth, to which Heywood gives the boastful title, "If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody," have absolutely no connection in subject or manner. The first part takes up Tudor history just where another formless work of the time, the "Sir Thomas Wyat" of Dekker and Webster, drops it. Heywood records the troubles of the Princess Elizabeth during the reign of her sister Mary very much in the same spirit in which Scott deals with the troubles of Amy Robsart. The long second part of "If You Know Not Me" is in no proper sense historic. It resembles the same author's "Four Prentices of London" in being a very far-fetched tribute to the London bourgeoisie; and its loose plot centres about the typical embodiment of citizen thrift, Sir Thomas Gresham, and his Royal Exchange. The

addition in the last few pages of a jaded account of the defeat of the Armada is obvious clap-trap.

After 1600, the vogue of the real history play declined rapidly. Nearly the whole compass of English history, mythical and real, and all the more effective foreign themes had been brought upon the stage, and the public appetite was glutted. Henceforth the historic title practically vanishes, and the chronicles are searched only for purely romantic matter. The latest examples of the true English history play are probably the incongruous "Life of Henry the Eighth," composed about 1613[1] by Fletcher in conjunction with Shakespeare, and John Ford's historical tragedy of "Perkin Warbeck."[2]

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Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt. MS. in British Museum (Add. 18653). *Printed*, A. H. Bullen. *Old Plays*, ii, 1883.

The Tragedy of Nero. "Newly Written," 1624. *Reprinted*, A. H. Bullen, *Old Plays*, i, 1882; *Mermaid* series, 1888.

FORD, JOHN: **The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck**, 1634. *Reprinted*, Ford's Works, *Mermaid* edition.

(For several other possible members of this class, see bibliography to chapter vi, p. 228 f.)

D. History Plays of Philosophic Import

The Reign of King Edward the Third, 1596; reprinted 1599. For later editions and criticism, see *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*.

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM. **The History of Henry the Fourth.** Part I, 1598. Other editions 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622, 1632, 1639; Shakespeare Folio, 1623.

The Second Part of Henry the Fourth, "continuing to his death and coronation of Henrie the fift," 1600 (two issues).

The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth. "With his battell fought at Agin Court in France," 1600. Reprinted 1602, 1608. More accurate, fuller text in Shakespeare Folio, 1623.

Julius Cæsar. First printed in the 1623 Folio.

E. Romanticized History Plays

I. Plays in which the historical element is imaginary or insignificant

PEELE, GEORGE: **Edward the First.** "With his returne from the holy land. Also the life of Lleuellen, rebell in Wales. Lastly, the sinking of Queene Elinor," 1593. Reprinted in Dyce's editions of Peele. See bibliography, p. 254.

A Knack to Know a Knave, 1594. Cf. p. 146.

GREENE, ROBERT: **The Scottish History of James the Fourth**, 1598. Cf. p. 293.

George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield, 1599. Cf. p. 293.

The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, 1594. Another edition, 1605. Reprinted, W. C. Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library;* Sidney Lee, *Shakespeare Classics*, 1909.

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM: **King Lear**, 1609. Another edition bearing same date, but probably printed in 1619. Altered text in 1623 Folio.

Cymbeline. First printed in the 1623 Folio.

DEKKER, THOMAS: **Old Fortunatus**, 1600. Ed. H. Scherer, *Münchener Beiträge*, xxi (1901).

The Shoemaker's Holiday, "Or, The Gentle Craft. With the humorous life of Simon Eyre, shoomaker, and Lord Maior of London," 1600. Other editions, 1610, 1618, 1624, 1631, 1657.

Satiromastix, "Or the untrussing of the Humorous Poet," 1602. See bibliography on p. 388.

Nobody and Somebody. "With the true Chronicle Historie of Elydure, who was fortunately three seuerall times crowned King of England," n. d. *Reprinted*, Glasgow, 1877 (50 copies); R. Simpson, *The School of Shakspere*, vol. i, 1878.

The Valiant Welshman, "Or The True Chronicle History of the life and valiant deedes of Caradoc the Great, King of Cambria, now called Wales," 1615. Another edition, 1663. "Written by R. A. Gent."

MIDDLETON, THOMAS: **The Mayor of Queenborough**, 1651. Reprinted in the *Mermaid* and other editions of Middleton.

ROWLEY, WILLIAM (and SHAKESPEARE?): **The Birth of Merlin: Or, the Child hath found his Father.** "Written by William Shakespear and William Rowley," 1662. See bibliography in *The Shakespeare Apocrypha.*

II. PLAYS IN WHICH GENUINE HISTORIC INTEREST IS BLENDED WITH INTERESTS OF OTHER KINDS

Look About You, 1600. Reprinted, W. C. Hazlitt, *Dodsley*, vii.

HEYWOOD, THOMAS: **King Edward the Fourth. Two Parts,**

1600. Other editions, 1605, 1613, 1619, 1626. Reprinted, B. Field, *Shakespeare Society*, 1842.

If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, "Or, The troubles of Queene Elizabeth." Part I. 1605. Other editions, 1606, 1608, 1610, 1613, 1623, 1632, 1639. Part II. "With the building of the Royal Exchange: And the famous Victorie of Queene Elizabeth, in the Yeare 1588," 1606. Other editions, 1609, 1623 ?, 1632. Reprinted (both parts), J. P. Collier, *Shakespeare Society*, 1851.

A Larum for London; or the Siege of Antwerp, 1602. Reprinted, R. Simpson, *The School of Shakspere*, No. 1, 1872.

ROWLEY, SAMUEL: **When You See Me, You Know Me**, "Or the famous Chronicle Historie of king Henry the eight," 1605. Other editions, 1613, 1621, 1632. Reprinted, K. Elze, 1874.

DEKKER, THOMAS, and WEBSTER, JOHN: **The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyat.** "With the Coronation of Queen Mary, and the coming in of King Philip," 1607. Another edition, 1612. Reprinted, editions of Dekker (1873) and Webster (1830, 1857, 1877). *Discussion:* F. E. Pierce, "The Collaboration of Webster and Dekker," *Yale Studies in English*, 1909.

DEKKER, THOMAS: **The Whore of Babylon**, 1607.

DAY, JOHN: **The Blind Beggar of Bednal-Green**, "with The merry humor of Tom Strowd the Norfolk Yeoman," 1659. Reprinted, A. H. Bullen, *The Works of John Day*, 1881, vol. ii.

CHAPTER X

DRAMA OF CONTEMPORARY INCIDENT

The abnormal conditions, sketched at the beginning of the last chapter, which fostered the sudden vogue, about 1590, of the rude history play, stimulated the growth of another type of drama similarly possessed of ephemeral attractiveness, and equally capable of hasty collaborative production. During the sixteen years between 1592, when "Arden of Feversham" was published, and 1608, when "A Yorkshire Tragedy" first appeared in print, at least nine dramas are recorded, which derive their subject from contemporary murders; and this number can easily be raised to a dozen by the inclusion of several problematical members of the species.

The reasons for this prolific exemplification, during the last years of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth, of a peculiar dramatic genre hardly to be found before or after are the same for the murder plays as for the cruder efforts in the staging of history. The former type, like the other, could be produced with great speed, and demanded in general little originality of conception or treatment. They were furthermore recommended by the powerful box-office consideration that the gruesome matter they handled maintained a peculiarly strong hold upon the minds of the Elizabethan public. How strong this hold was no one will require to be told who has glanced over the entries for the period in the Stationers' Register,

or is conversant with any branch of the current literature of the time. Ballad broadsides, chronicles, and homilies all testify to an unusually lively interest in murders and scaffold eloquence. A very good instance of this trend of the sensational journalism of the day is Anthony Munday's "View of Sundry Examples. Reporting many straunge murthers, sundry persons periured, Signes and tokens of Gods anger towards us — And all memorable murthers since the murther of Maister Saunders by George Browne to this present and bloody murther of Abell Bourne, Hosyer, who dwelled in Newgate Market, 1580." [1] The Chronicles of Holinshed and Stow, the great historical repositories of the epoch, are full of tales of recent homicide, reported with the most serious care; and it is only natural that the dramatic tyros, who searched their pages for material, did not discriminate more closely than the authors themselves between true history and vulgar horror.

Of the known murder plays — merely a small fraction, probably, of the total output of the period — a number survive only in the mention of "Henslowe's Diary." Such are "Page of Plymouth" by Jonson and Dekker, acted in 1599; "Cox of Collumpton," by Day and Haughton, 1599; two parts of "The Black Dog of Newgate," by Day, Smith, Hathway, and another poet, 1602–1603; probably also the two parts of "Black Bateman of the North," 1598, in which Chettle, Dekker, Drayton, and Wilson were all concerned. The precise subject of the last work is not certain, but

[1] This curious treatise was reprinted by J. P. Collier as an appendix to his edition of Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, *Shakespeare Society*, 1851.

the others all dealt with notorious crimes of the day; and they show Henslowe at his usual practice of employing a number of low-salaried hacks in the rapid preparation of theatrical "shockers." In the case of "The Black Dog of Newgate," it would seem that the manager did not even know the name of one of the authors, whom he refers to four times as "the other poet," — apparently somebody called in at a pinch to help Day, Smith, and Hathway.

"Page of Plymouth," which Henslowe mentions in August, 1599, is interesting because it gives us a glimpse of Ben Jonson within two years after his first appearance among dramatic writers. The entry reads: "Lent vnto wm Borne alles birde the 10 of aguste 1594 to Lend vnto bengemyne Johnsone & thomas deckers in earneste of ther boock wch they [are] a writtenge called pagge of p[le]moth the some — xxxxs." Eight pounds was the entire amount paid for the work, that being, on Henslowe's niggardly scale, the full average price of a drama. The theme is a revolting story of wifely infidelity and assassination, very similar to those treated in "Arden of Feversham" and "A Warning for Fair Women." [1]

The Black Dog of Newgate was a widely infamous character, one Luke Hutton, — son, it has been said, or cousin, of the Archbishop of York. Executed in 1598 for repeated highway robberies and for other crimes, he impressed himself upon the public mind by his "Lamentation," of which a very doubtful version is preserved among the *Roxburghe Ballads;* (vol. ii, ff

[1] A ballad and a prose tract dealing with the Plymouth murder have survived. See an article on "The Story of Page of Plymouth" in *The Shakespeare Society's Papers,* vol. ii, 1845.

318, 319): "Luke Huttons Lamentation, which he wrote the day before his Death, being condemned to be hang'd at York, for his robberies and trespasses committed thereabouts. To the Tune of wandering and wavering."[1]

Four typical murder plays remain intact: "Arden of Feversham" and "A Warning for Fair Women," powerful anonymous dramas both of which have been ascribed to Shakespeare, though in the latter case upon entirely negligible grounds; "A Yorkshire Tragedy," of which the earliest edition bears on its title-page the bold assertion, "Written by W. Shakespeare"; and the very curious work called "Two Tragedies in One," which claims for its author an elusive Robert Yarington.

The earliest of these plays is "Arden of Feversham," the greatest tragedy of the group, which was licensed April 3, 1592, and printed in the same year with an amply descriptive title-page: "The Lamentable and

[1] The ballad commences: —

"I am a poor Prisoner condemned to die
ah wo is me, wo is me, for my great folly.
Fast fettered in Irons in place where I lye
be warned young wantons, hemp passeth green holly.
My parents were of good degree
By whom I would not ruled be
Lord Jesus receive me, with mercy relieve me,
Receive, O sweet Saviour, my Spirit unto thee."

There are twenty-two such stanzas, and two pictures in the original broadside in the British Museum. See also the "woeful Ballad made by Mr. George Mannynton an houre before he suffered at Cambridge-castell," entered on the Stationers' Register, Nov. 7, 1576, and parodied in the "Repentance" of Quicksilver in "Eastward Hoe."

True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent. Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the loue she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat ruffins Blackwill and Shakbag, to kill him. Wherin is shewed the great mallice and discimulation of a wicked womman, the vnsatiable desire of filthie lust and the shamefull end of all murderers." The crime portrayed occurred in 1551, more than a generation before the play can have been composed, but all the circumstances were still fresh in the people's memory. Holinshed, whose narrative the dramatist follows, pauses in his Chronicle to devote six great folio pages, double columned and closely printed, to the atrocity. The plot of the play does not unfold itself according to dramatic rules; yet it holds the attention notwithstanding. The first four acts are taken up with successive attempts upon the life of the unsuspecting Arden, who escapes always by some unlooked for accident, till finally stabbed in his own house at the beginning of Act V. The rest of the last act pictures the discovery and condemnation of the murderers. Upon this unpromising framework, the author of "Arden of Feversham" has built up a tragedy of coarse but mighty passion, which several distinguished critics have believed Shakespearean, but which there is better reason now for supposing to be the latest and finest work of Kyd.[1] The play contains several splendid declamatory speeches, three or four fine scenes of dialogue and action, and a rude colossal figure in Arden's wife, which, though sometimes unpardonably vulgar and altogether without the

[1] See Charles Crawford, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, xxxix (1903), 74–86. Reprinted, *Collectanea*, 1st Series (1906), 101 ff.

touch of romantic pathos inherent in the evil characters of great ideal poets, yet shows itself the work of a vigorous hand.

The second of the extant murder tragedies was printed in 1599 as lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain's (Shakespeare's) Company, and with the following title: "A Warning for Faire Women, containing The most Tragicall and Lamentable Murther of Master George Sanders, of London, Marchant, nigh Shooters Hill; consented vnto by his owne wife, acted by M. Browne, Mistris Drewry and Trusty Roger, agents therin: with their seuerall ends." The murder of George Sanders took place in 1573, and in the same year there appeared a circumstantial account of the whole matter in a pamphlet of some twenty pages, followed by Stow and Holinshed as well as by the author of the play.[1] Another mention of the crime occurs in Munday's "View of Sundry Examples," from which an illustrative quotation may be pardoned, because, to my mind, it indicates how murder stories established themselves in the imagination of the people and gained a permanent foothold in literature. The

[1] The pamphlet is reprinted in Simpson's *School of Shakspere*, vol. ii. There can be no doubt that the play is based directly upon the pamphlet, and not upon the chronicles. Note, for example, the following parallel. After the arrest of the persons suspected of complicity in Sanders's death, Mistress Drury tells Mistress Sanders, according to the pamphlet, "that . . . she was fully determined not to dissemble any longer, nor to hazarde hir owne soule eternally for the safetie of another bodies temporall life." The author of the play merely versifies, and writes (ll. 1571–1573): —

> "Should I, to purchase safety for another,
> Or lengthen out another's temporall life,
> Hazard mine owne soule everlastingly?"

original pamphlet and the chronicles give merely the facts as they occurred, plus a certain amount of moralizing. Munday hardly cites any facts at all, — apparently the story was already well known, — but he uses the circumstance of Browne's crime and punishment as a point of departure for a vast quantity of euphuistic fine writing. The murder, that is to say, had risen out of the plane of current journalism into that of belles-lettres. Munday writes: —

"Not long since, one George Browne, a man of stature goodly and excellent, if lyfe and deedes thereto had beene equivalent; but as the auncient adage is, goodly is he that goodly dooth, and comely is he that behaveth himself comely, so may it be witnessed in this man, who more respected a vaine pride and prodigall pleasure, which remayned in his person, then commendation and good report that followeth a godly and vertuous life. But nowe a dayes everie courageous cutter, euerie Sim Swashbuckler, and everie desperate Dick, that can stand to his tackling lustely, and behave him selfe so quarrelously that he is ashamed of all good and honest company, he is a gallant fellowe, a goodly man of his handes, and one, I promise you, that as soone comes to Tyburne as euer a one of them all. . . . But he [Browne] a wretch, more desirous of his death then wylling his welfare, more mindfull of murther then savegard of his soule, so bent to blindnesse, that he expected not the light, strooke the stroke that returned his shame, dyd the deede that drove him to destiny, and fulfilled the fact, that in the end he found folly. O, minde most monstrous! O, heart most hard! O, intent so yrksome! whome neyther preferment might perswade, rytches move to regard, affection

cause to respect, former freendship force to fancie, nor no vertue of the minde seeme too satisfie. Where was the bonds of loyaltie? where was the regard of honestie? Where was the feare of the Almightie? where was the care of Christianitie? or where was the hope of eternall felicitie? and last, where was thy duty to God, thy Prince, and countrey?"

The most striking difference between "Arden of Feversham" and the "Warning for Fair Women" lies in the greater comprehensiveness of the latter play. "Arden" begins abruptly with the immediate preparation for the catastrophe, and nothing is treated in detail except the repeated attempts upon the hero's life and his accidental escapes. The other drama presents the whole story from the first meeting of Browne and Mistress Sanders through the formation and execution of the plot to the final discovery, trial, and condemnation of all the guilty parties. The finest portions of "A Warning for Fair Women" are those which depict the remorse of the culprits after the murder has been committed. Browne's sudden terror as he hears the dying words of Sanders is well portrayed; and the most impressive scene of the play is certainly that in which Browne comes red-handed to meet his accomplice, the dead man's wife. The bold interposition of Sanders's young son and his childish games in the midst of the bitter recriminations of the murderers shows a keen sense of the dramatic and no small knowledge of human nature.

The author of "A Warning for Fair Women," like the author of "Arden of Feversham," saw clearly the great fault of this kind of drama, — the small opportunity, namely, in such chronicles of particular inci-

dents for the representation of broader and more universal feelings.[1] The last lines of the "Warning" voice an appeal to the audience to

> "Beare with this true and home-borne Tragedy,
> Yeelding so slender argument and scope
> To build a matter of importance on,
> And in such forme, as, happly, you expected.
> What now hath fail'd to-morrow you shall see
> Perform'd by History or Comedy."

"Arden of Feversham" ends in the same strain:—

> "Gentlemen, we hope youle pardon this naked Tragedy,
> Wherin no filed points are foisted in
> To make it gratious to the eare or eye;
> For simple truth is gratious enough,
> And needes no other points of glosing stuffe."

There is more in this than the usual mock-modesty of the epilogue. The effort to visualize the sordid details of contemporary crime must of necessity clip the wings of Tragedy. "Arden" and the "Warning for Fair Women" are faithful dramatizations of specific atrocities, never rising for more than a few speeches into the rarefied universal atmosphere which surrounds the whole of Shakespeare's murder plays, "Macbeth" and "Othello"; and this fact is perhaps the one absolute, incontrovertible proof that Shakespeare can have had no important part in the composition of either. In these two plays, however, the inevitable faults of their class are palliated by the truth and brilliance of individual scenes.

[1] The prefatory dialogue in the *Warning for Fair Women* and the epistle prefixed to George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) are probably the most important pieces of dramatic criticism to be found in any English stage play previous to 1600.

The composition of murder tragedies appears to have been very largely instrumental in teaching the Elizabethan playwrights the dramatic capabilities of the life about them. Both the works I have discussed abound in topical allusions giving to many of their scenes a delightful savor of sixteenth-century England, and bearing witness at the same time to the rise of that trend of realistic self-absorption which reached a head about 1610, and which makes many of the Jacobean plays starve the romantic reader to glut the antiquary. In one of the dramas before us we see Arden and his friend Franklin go off to take a turn or two in Paul's before supping at the eighteen-penny ordinary. We see the stalls before the church and the apprentices in charge, and learn of the "ould filching" which is likely to occur "when the presse comes foorth of Paules." [1] We hear of Gadshill robberies and devices for cutting purses; and before the play ends we find ourselves intimately acquainted with the manner of life of the cut-throats, Black Will and Shakebag. The domestic economy of Arden's household in town and country is very fully pictured; and this is one of the few plays in which gentlemen exchange convincingly the small gossip of the week or trivial dinner invitations. In "A Warning for Fair Women," the Queen's court at Greenwich is repeatedly mentioned, and one scene offers a charming glimpse of the courtiers drinking in the buttery, where ale is dispensed as bounty to all comers. The dark side of the life of the day is portrayed with equal sincerity by the peasant, Old John, when he discovers Sanders's body: "What an age live we in! when men have no mercy of men more than of

[1] Cf. *Arden of Feversham*, II, ii, 53, 54.

dogges, bloudier than beasts! This is the deed of some swaggering, swearing, drunken, desperate Dicke. Call we them Cabbaleers? masse, they be Canniballes, that have the stabbe readyer in their handes than a penny in their purse. Shames death be their share."

The curious work called "Two Lamentable Tragedies," or "Two Tragedies in One," was published in 1601 with the name of Robert Yarington on the title-page. As the heading implies, this production consists of two separate plots not in any way connected, except that a scene of the one alternates ordinarily with a scene of the other. The more poetical division of the work concerns an Italian version of the Babes in the Wood story, and has been conjecturally regarded as standing in some relation to Chettle's non-extant "Orphans' Tragedy," for which Henslowe made several payments in 1599. The other part, which more directly concerns the present subject, dramatizes the murder, in August, 1594, of Robert Beech, a London merchant, and his apprentice, Thomas Winchester, by an avaricious neighbor named Merrey. It is usual to connect this portion of the work in some sort with an anonymous "Beeches Tragedy," licensed for acting in January, 1600, and with the "tragedy of Merie" mentioned by Henslowe about the same time as by Day and Haughton. Of Robert Yarington, the proclaimed author, nothing whatever is known.

As preserved, this motley play is far the worst of the extant murder tragedies, and it constitutes a glaring example of the disaster which follows the effort to deck out coarse realistic material in a style of false and pretentious refinement. In agreement with the more

moderate practice of "A Warning for Fair Women," the writer imbeds his double plot in a complex allegorical framework after the archaic manner of Kyd's "Soliman and Perseda," thus adding a third incongruous element to his piece in a series of didactic dialogues between Homicide, Avarice, and Truth. Yarington's style tends everywhere toward ridiculous inflation; and it would perhaps not be easy to find a happier instance of misapplied and self-convicted pomposity than the words with which a neighbor greets the recovery of the head and legs of the dismembered Beech: —

> "They are the same; alas, what is become
> Of the remainder of this wretched man?"

With this affectation in language is strongly contrasted the excessive crudity of the play in all matters of dramatic arrangement. Several of the stage directions are of high value in marking the limits of naïveté tolerated in Elizabethan realistic presentation. Thus, we read: "Then Merry must passe to Beeches shoppe, who must sit in his shop and Winchester his boy stand by"; and later, "Then being in the upper Rome [room] Merry strikes him in the head fifteene times." In this scene, the spectator is required to conceive Merry first as in his own shop. He must then imagine him going to visit his neighbor Beech, entering the latter's shop, bringing him back to his own house, taking him indoors and up to his garret, and beating his brains out, *coram populo*, with fifteen blows of a hammer.

The last great crime of Shakespeare's age which received theatrical attention, and the most widely bruited, probably, of all, occurred in 1605. It is thus described in Stow's Chronicle: "Walter Callverly

of Calverly in Yorkshire Esquier, murdred 2 of his young children, stabbed his wife into the bodie with full purpose to have murdred her, and instantly went from his house to have slaine his youngest child at nurse, but was prevented. For which fact at his triall in Yorke hee stood mute and was judged to be prest to death, according to which judgment he was executed at the castell of Yorke the 5th of August [1605]."

Upon this ghastly affair were founded two plays: "A Yorkshire Tragedy," published in 1608, and George Wilkins's "Miseries of Enforced Marriage," which appeared in the previous year "as it is now playd by his Majesties Servants." The latter drama possesses an accidental interest as the only play known to have been written independently by the obscure person who, according to the usually received opinion,[1] collaborated with Shakespeare in "Pericles." Though printed a year earlier than the "Yorkshire Tragedy," the other play was almost certainly composed later. The title-page of the first quarto tells us that the "Miseries" was even then (1607) being performed by the King's Men; and the imaginative liberties taken with the course of events and with the characters would indicate that the period of writing stood removed a couple of years from the bleak reality. "A Yorkshire Tragedy," on the other hand, bears every mark of hasty and nearly contemporaneous work. The author of the latter play would appear not to have known the names of the figures, and to have been

[1] See, however, D. L. Thomas's argument against Wilkins's authorship of *Pericles*, *Engl. Stud.*, 39 (1908), 210–239, where interesting evidence is offered in favor of ascribing the play to Shakespeare and Thomas Heywood.

acquainted with only the bare outline of the catastrophe, while standing far too near the facts to venture upon any such artistic elaboration as we find in the "Miseries." The brief "Yorkshire Tragedy" is occupied almost solely with the murders themselves and their punishment, adding but casual glimpses of the Husband's first love affair, his family connection, and London prodigality. It is just these last points that the "Miseries of Enforced Marriage" dwells upon; and when taken together the two plays give a fairly comprehensive view of the situation.

Everything about the "Yorkshire Tragedy" points to the same hasty assortment of miscellaneous and ill-digested material which Yarington's "Two Tragedies in One" exemplifies. The first page of the original edition is headed: "All's One, or, One of the Foure Plaies in One, called A York-shire Tragedy, as it was Plaid by the Kings Maiesties Plaiers." The most reasonable inference from this passage is that three independent or vaguely connected sets of additions had been employed in order to fill out to the compass required for stage purposes the brief impromptu treatment of the murder, which, as preserved, extends to something less than the average length of two acts. When it came, three years later, to printing, the extraneous matter was omitted. It is worth noting that the company which in 1607 was actually performing "The Miseries of Enforced Marriage" is the same which had performed the "Yorkshire Tragedy," — presumably in 1605, when interest in the Calverley murders was strongest. It is, therefore, very probable that the play of Wilkins represents a thorough literary adaptation of the original "Four Plays in One," de-

signed to secure continued currency for the work after the temporary appeal due to sensational curiosity had subsided. Wilkins may have retained in altered form some of the earlier matter in the "Four Plays"; but as he discarded the tragic conclusion, the original treatment of the murders would seem to have been left intact, to find separate publication just after the appearance of the improved text.

In versification, in character delineation, and in the general absence of human sympathy, "A Yorkshire Tragedy" is a work of the low dramatic level which the occasion and purpose of its composition would lead one to expect. The impudent claim of Shakespearean authorship must, along with several other instances of premeditated fraud, be laid heavily to the charge of its ill-reputed publisher, Thomas Pavier. Yet the play does contain three or four passages of prose strikingly superior to all the rest, and characterized by an uncanny play of fancy which recall the porter scene in "Macbeth" and the morbid brilliance of the supposedly Jonsonian additions to "The Spanish Tragedy." These few speeches are perhaps not glaringly unworthy of Shakespeare, nor very different from what he might have written, had he stood by with the proverbial penful of ink, and chosen to give a moment's attention to the miserable piece of sloppy sensationalism which his company were demeaning themselves to perform. To accept this possibility is merely to reduce the charge against Pavier from uncomplicated mendacity to equivocation.

Technically considered, "The Miseries of Enforced Marriage" hardly belongs to the group of contemporary murder plays. Wilkins has altered the names of

his characters, added many imaginary figures, and has substituted a happy conclusion for the revolting butchery of reality, by causing his intending murderer to repent at the latest possible moment. The connection of this tragi-comedy with the Calverley affair, first pointed out by Mr. P. A. Daniel in 1879,[1] is, however, indisputable; and the play affords an excellent instance of the tendency, everywhere manifesting itself at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to pass from the rude dramatization of specific contemporary events to the imaginative portrayal of general realistic conditions. Here one can see the writer actually in process of bridging the gap between unpolished works of concrete incident, like "Arden of Feversham," and those great critical analyses of current manners of which Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair" is possibly the most masterly example. The consideration of "The Miseries of Enforced Marriage" belongs, therefore, hardly less to the next chapter than to the present. Quite mediocre in the essentials of plot and poetic finish, this piece yields to few Jacobean plays in the life-likeness of its characters. Nearly all the *dramatis personæ* come direct from the streets and taverns of contemporary London, and the comedy of the time possesses few more successful type-portraits than those of the shrewd and honest old family servant Butler, and the gentleman-gamester Ilford.

Thomas Heywood's "Woman Killed with Kindness," written in 1603, illustrates in a different manner the tendency to employ material proper to the murder play for the purposes of more catholic art. Up to the middle of Act IV, the relations between Frankford,

[1] *Athenæum*, Oct. 4, No. 2710.

Mistress Frankford, and Wendoll run parallel to the state of affairs in "Arden of Feversham" and "A Warning for Fair Women." The admirable picture, moreover, of the management of Master Frankford's household repeats the most characteristic merit of the latter plays. But Heywood had too much both of the moralist and the artist to give his drama the hideous termination which the earlier poets had taken over from the history of crime. The situation, which in the murder plays led to the cold-blooded assassination of the injured husband, is made by Heywood to result in the exposure and remorseful anguish of the evil-doers. The portrayal of Mistress Frankford's feelings and fate from the time of her wearied acquiescence in the sin which she has come to loath (IV, iii, *ad fin.*) is a triumph of imaginative art. Yet the imagination of the poet clearly takes its flight from the basis of realistic sympathy which the murder plays had created. How much Heywood owes in this part of the play to his humbler predecessors in the same theme becomes evident when we contrast the scenes dealing with Mistress Frankford with the shallow and insincere underplot of Acton and Mountford.

"The Miseries of Enforced Marriage" and "A Woman Killed with Kindness" thus make it clear that the class of murder tragedies, however transitory in itself, yet left the English theatre a legacy, both in comedy and in tragedy, which was permanent. The glaring atrocities, which first drew the eyes of the ruder playwrights to the life about them, soon lost their zest; but in the meantime their study had enriched the drama with several new trends of sympathy and observation.

It is by no means to be supposed that the murder plays constitute the sole evidence of the tendency of the Elizabethan popular stage, about the close of the century, to treat matters of local and current rather than universal application. The plays we have discussed make up the most readily distinguished and probably the best preserved group of dramas based on contemporary incident; but any comparison of theatrical and social history between 1580 and 1610 shows the drama of the age permeated everywhere by tangled threads of topical allusion, now unfortunately only partially and doubtfully explainable. It is, indeed, unsafe and uncritical to regard every average play of the epoch as a definite historical document, and to seek, as many have sought, to trace each one back to some particular occurrence of the time.[1] Yet no student can afford to overlook the logical connection between the ephemeral interests of the Elizabethan public and the work of those playwrights whose function it was to be the public's entertainers in ordinary. From the time of "Gorboduc" and "Gammer Gurton's Needle" onward, the evolution of the drama was very largely a matter of the origin, development, and absorption of theatrical fashions, each closely interpretative of some phase of the general popular life. "Gorboduc" itself is an "occasional" play, composed in view of a particular political situation, and intended to stimulate the Queen to speedy care of the royal succession. So, the court comedies of Lyly are nearly all in some degree parables of fashionable history, and depend for their elucida-

[1] The most notable exponents of this dangerous tendency in criticism are Richard Simpson and the late Mr. Fleay.

tion upon the proper understanding of momentary conditions.

Under normal circumstances, it is true, particularly on the public stage, the plays possessing the elements of permanent success were those in which local appeal was almost entirely obliterated in a higher and more catholic view of art. Yet even in these works the pulsation of current thought and gossip can often be felt; and any great public excitement was likely in this age to obtain immediate and undisguised expression on the popular stage. Besides the constant tendency of the theatres to keep pace with the vulgar curiosity concerning spectacular crime and the great flare of national ardor which the Armada year produced, two great controversies of the day extended themselves to the drama and became important factors in theatrical history. The one was the famous Martin Marprelate dispute of 1588–1590; the other the "War of the Theatres," which culminated about the year 1600.

None of the dramatic texts called forth by the Marprelate agitation have survived. The probability is that they were all coarse impromptus which trusted for their effect rather to farcical action and clownish caricature than to any regularly developed plot. As might naturally be assumed, it appears to have been exclusively the anti-Martinist, Episcopal party, which handled this un-Puritanical weapon of stage satire. The controversy itself broke out in 1588, but the first suggestion of its transference to the theatres occurs in Nashe's "Countercuff Given to Martin Junior" (August, 1589), where allusion is made to "The Anatomie latelie taken of him, the blood and the humors that

were taken from him, by launcing and worming him at London vpon the common stage." [1]

In regard to the mode of treatment, we have only a few hints of burlesque scenes, such as one in which "Vetus Comoedia" brought in the lady Divinity with her face scratched and her stomach nauseated by the lawless attacks of Martin.[2] The controversial importance attached to these works is indicated by the apparent necessity of legal interference,[3] and by Lyly's fervent ejaculation in the anti-Martinist tract, "Pap with a Hatchet": "Would those Comedies might be allowed to be plaid that are pend, and then I am sure he [Martin] would be decyphered, and so perhaps discouraged." [4]

The militant tendencies of the English stage between 1588 and 1591 were not exclusively employed in religious or political controversy. That personal satire was also rampant appears from a famous sentence in Greene's preface to "Perimedes the Blacksmith" (1588): "I keepe my old course, to palter vp some thing in Prose, vsing mine old poesie still, *Omne tulit punctum*, although latelye two Gentlemen Poets made two madmen of Rome beate it out of their paper bucklers; and had it in derision, for that I could not make my verses iet vpon the stage in tragicall buskins." And then, after several ill-natured innuendoes against Marlowe and another poet, Greene returns to

[1] Cf. Nashe's Works, ed. R. B. McKerrow, i, 59.

[2] *Pasquil's Return*, Nashe, ed. McKerrow, i, 92.

[3] See Collier, ed. 1879, i, 264, for the text of the Lord Mayor's letter of November, 1589, relative to the suppression of all plays in the city by reason of the "mislike" of the Master of the Revels.

[4] Cf. Lyly's Works, ed. Bond, iii, 408.

his special cause of anger: "If I speake darkely, Gentlemen, and offend with this digression, I craue pardon, in that I but answere in print what they haue offered on the Stage."[1]

The so-called "War of the Theatres," or "Poetomachia," as Dekker terms it, arose just ten years later than the Marprelate discussion. This second controversy has left far more important dramatic evidences than the other, though it is probable that it bulked much the smaller in the eyes of the contemporary public. The limits of this theatrical war, which involved Ben Jonson and certain rival poets by him denominated "Poetasters," have been unjustifiably extended by Fleay and his followers. All statements about the affair need careful weighing.

The permanently important results of the war were the production in very close succession, about the middle of the year 1601, of two great plays: Jonson's "Poetaster" and Dekker's "Satiromastix." These comedies were acted in confessed rivalry by rival companies, — Jonson's by the Children of her Majesty's Chapel, by whom his previous play of "Cynthia's Revels" had been presented; Dekker's by Shakespeare's company and by the Children of Paul's. In each case the sole or main object was personal satire. "The Poetaster" closes with a distinct expression of Jonson's determination not to proceed in the controversy;[2] and there is in fact no reason to believe that

[1] Greene's Works, ed. Grosart, vii, 7, 8.

[2] See the Apologetical Dialogue spoken "only once" as an epilogue on the first production of the play (*Mermaid* ed., 375 ff). This dialogue was omitted from the 1602 edition because of legal restraint, but was restored in the 1616 Folio.

the quarrel was continued after 1601, otherwise than in a few vague allusions.

The earlier history of the dispute is not so clear. Yet it seems possible to reach the truth in all essentials, if we are willing to abandon pure speculation and accept at their face value the statements of the two main combatants, both of whom appear to be perfectly sincere. Jonson asserts, in the Apologetical Dialogue affixed to "The Poetaster," that his opponents had provoked him for three years "with their petulant styles On every stage," till "at last unwilling, But weary, I confess, of so much trouble," he resolved to "try if shame could win upon 'hem." He thus suggests that "The Poetaster" was his first, as well as his last, effort at satire against individuals.

Dekker, on the other hand, says, in the Preface to "Satiromastix," that Jonson, or Horace, "questionless made himself believe that his Burgonian wit might desperately challenge all comers, and that none durst take up the foils against him"; and he adds that if "an Inquisition should be taken touching this lamentable merry murdering of Innocent Poetry," the verdict "would be found on the Poetasters' side *Se defendendo*," though, as he admits, "Notwithstanding, the Doctors think otherwise."

It is easy to reconcile the two statements. Jonson was doubtless quite justified in stating "The Poetaster" to be his first overt attack upon his fellow dramatists. With the exception of the skit on Anthony Munday as Antonio Balladino in the first scene of "The Case is Altered" — an incidental bit of ridicule apparently unconnected with the question in hand — I do not believe that any of Jonson's comedies previous to

"The Poetaster" contained satirical matter which a contemporary audience would have applied to any active dramatist of the day.

The attempt to explain various figures in "Every Man in his Humor," "Every Man out of his Humor," and "Cynthia's Revels" as distinct travesties of Daniel, Munday, Marston, Dekker, and other poets, though very variously maintained, leads only to conflicting results, and seems to me inherently uncritical. Jonson's satire is direct and bold. In view of the exquisite cleverness and clearness of his caricatures of Munday in "The Case is Altered" and of Marston and Dekker in "The Poetaster," it is inconceivable that he could be guilty of the vague and pointless gibes which Fleay and Penniman attempt to find in the three other plays.

Moreover, each of these three plays just alluded to has a purpose entirely distinct from the ridicule of individuals; and the various characters introduced are all delineated in accordance with this general purpose. "Every Man in his Humor," a comedy of light intrigue and social types, requires its "town gull," Master Matthew, for the sake of atmosphere, just as it requires Captain Bobadill, the "Paul's Man"; and no trait in either figure can justly be credited to any other source than the artistic demands of the imaginary plot.[1]

"Every Man out of his Humor" has, of course, a definitely satiric aim, but the mark of Jonson's ridi-

[1] There appears to be no support for the idea of Fleay and Penniman that the poet Daniel is satirized as Master Matthew and Fastidious Brisk in Jonson's *Every Man* plays and as Emulo in *Patient Grissell*. For a discussion of the latter work (by Dekker, Chettle, and Haughton) and its slight possible connection with the theatrical war, see the next chapter, p. 409 f.

cule is here never the single individual. Rather, the spectators are promised in the Prologue

> "a mirror,
> Where they shall see the *time's* deformity
> Anatomized in every nerve and sinew."

This promise is faithfully kept. By means of such varied type figures as Sordido, Fungoso, Deliro, Carlo Buffone, and Fastidious Brisk, Jonson holds up to reprehension the follies of all contemporary life, whether in country, city, or court. That he should have been willing, in the midst of so gigantic a task, to divert his attention and that of his audience to the gibbeting of the frailties of a series of small poets of his time is not probable, and is nowhere really suggested by the text.[1]

"Cynthia's Revels" has a narrower scope than "Every Man out of his Humor" in as much as it restricts its satire practically to courtly types alone. Thus, general embodiments of fashionable absurdity in the earlier play, like Saviolina, Fastidious, and Sir Puntarvolo, become the progenitors of a great number of more subtly differentiated figures in the later work. In these narrow subdivisions of the genus "courtier,"

[1] The only serious indication of personal satire in *Every Man out of his Humor* is found in the circumstance that Clove, a minor figure in III, i, employs for comic effect a number of turgid Marstonian words. There is no doubt that Jonson had Marston's stylistic excesses in mind when he wrote the passage; but the theory that Clove is on that account to be regarded as a personal caricature of Marston is quite untenable. The very same passage also puts into Clove's mouth a parody of two high-sounding lines of *Julius Cæsar* (III, ii, 110, 111); whence we should have to assume a second personal identification between Clove and Shakespeare.

with which "Cynthia's Revels" mainly concerns itself, individual traits and failings naturally play a somewhat larger part, and Jonson doubtless relies rather more than in "Every Man out of his Humor" upon his observation of actual persons. It may be barely possible, for instance, that he gives to Hedon and Anaides unfavorable peculiarities which he had noted among his fellow poets. But he is far likelier to have found the prototypes of these figures in the aristocratic circle to which they both belong. The circumstances of composition of "Cynthia's Revels" seem in themselves to negative the idea that the play is in any sense the outgrowth of a literary quarrel. Jonson's purpose, frankly expressed, is the Lylian one of securing court patronage for himself by means of a Lylian allegory in eulogy of Elizabeth. Such a drama, written of the court and for the court, and with the object of portraying the unapproachable merits of the author, would surely be no fit place for expatiating on plebeian professional squabbles or indulging in undignified bickerings with two poets admittedly Jonson's inferiors in the judgment of the time.[1]

[1] I am not forgetful of the arguments of Fleay and Penniman in favor of an intricate satirical allegory in *Cynthia's Revels*. Even saner critics like Small accept on the whole the identification of Hedon and Anaides with Crispinus and Demetrius in *The Poetaster*, and hence with Marston and Dekker respectively. The only solid reason, however, for this is the fact that Dekker makes Horace (Jonson) repeat in *Satiromastix*, with reference to Crispinus and Demetrius, words which Criticus had used of Hedon and Anaides in *Cynthia's Revels*: —

> "Why should I care what euery Dor doth buz
> In credulous ears? It is a crowne to me;
> That the best iudgements can report me wrong'd.

I believe, therefore, that Jonson did not openly express himself against his dramatic rivals before the appearance of "The Poetaster." Yet in another way he had undoubtedly caused irritation general enough to justify Dekker's plea of self-defence on the poetasters' side. In each of the trio of satirical comedies which begins with "Every Man out of his Humor," Jonson presents himself, in the persons of Asper, Criticus (Crites),[1] and Horace respectively, as an insuffer-

> . . . . . .
> I think but what they are, and am not moou'd:
> The one a light voluptuous Reueler,
> The other, a strange arrogating puffe,
> Both impudent, and arrogant enough."
>
> (*Satiromastix*, ed. Scherer, ll. 416–418, 420–423.
> Cf. *Cynthia's Revels*, 1602 version, ed. Bang,
> ll. 1360–1362, 1376–1379.)

From the comment of Asinius (l. 424), "S'lid, do not Criticus Reuel in these lynes?" it seems clear that Dekker's purpose in quoting the passage is merely to ridicule the pompous egoism of Criticus-Horace-Jonson, and not at all to suggest the identity of the two pairs of characters about whom the words are spoken. In fact, Hedon and Anaides do not resemble Marston and Dekker either as the latter actually were, or as Jonson caricatured them in *The Poetaster*. The former are extravagant and feeble-minded gallants of the court, whose offence against Criticus consists not in literary rivalry, but in the spreading of calumnious reports. Only prepossession in favor of a theory could well suggest a connection between these symbolic representatives of fashionable dissipation (Hedon = Self-Indulgence; Anaides = Shamelessness) and the beggarly hacks, Crispinus and Demetrius, of *The Poetaster*. That Dekker himself did not expect the identification to be pressed is obvious from the contradiction between the quoted description of Anaides, "a strange arrogating puffe," and Horace's sketch of Demetrius only eight lines above as "the slightest cob-web-lawne peece of a Poet" (*Satiromastix*, l. 415).

[1] The representative of Jonson in *Cynthia's Revels* is called Criti-

able pattern of perfection. Though he seems in the two earlier plays of the group to be hunting larger game than Marston and Dekker, and to be contrasting his virtues with the defects of a much broader world than that of the current stage; yet there can be no doubt that his general arrogance had made him from the first a butt for the resentful sarcasm of several writers to whom Jonson could honestly claim to have given little direct offence.[1]

Jonson's excuse for "The Poetaster" was that he had been provoked on every stage for three years; *i. e.*, from about 1598. It is regularly accepted that the original provocation came from John Marston, and it is usual to explain as referring to this circumstance Jonson's later statement to Drummond of Hawthornden that he had beaten Marston and taken his pistol from him, because the latter had represented him on the stage.

In the search for a work which might thus have incensed Jonson, two plays of doubtful Marstonian authorship have been found. "Histriomastix," a dull allegorical drama, which Marston probably revised about 1598, certainly involves a satire, as yet insufficiently explained, in connection with the public stage of the time. This play is, furthermore, given the ominous distinction of special mention by name in the

cus in the first edition of the play (1602) and in the allusions of *Satiromastix*. In the Jonson Folio of 1616, and consequently in most subsequent editions, the name is altered to Crites.

[1] This seems to be the fair interpretation of the dialogue between Horace, Crispinus, and Demetrius in *Satiromastix* (ll. 436 ff), though Dekker naturally overstresses the insincerity and malice of Horace.

sarcastic passage in "Every Man out of his Humor" most frequently quoted in relation to this subject.[1] It is easy to make out a resemblance between Jonson and the revised (Marstonian ?) figure of Chrysoganus in "Histriomastix"; but Chrysoganus is presented in what seems to the modern reader a favorable light. On the whole, one can hardly believe that Jonson was greatly angered by this portrait. It may, however, have led to a coolness between the two poets, and can quite reasonably have served Jonson as an upper limit when he came later to make a mental list of the stage attacks upon himself.

A clearer case of spite on Marston's part is perhaps to be observed in "Jack Drum's Entertainment," printed in 1601, and acted by the Children of Paul's, who later performed "Satiromastix." In the absence of definite proof of Marston's authorship of "Jack Drum," and in the failure of all unquestionable allusions to Jonson, the bearing of the play upon the quarrel is likely to remain matter of conjecture. It is certain, however, that the author goes out of his way to introduce into his main comedy of Pasquil and Katherine a laughable treatment of the deserved humiliation which befalls Brabant Senior, a pompous egoist of Jonsonian stamp.[2] Though the matter is hardly susceptible of proof, it is not at all improbable

[1] See the speech of Clove near the middle of III, i (*Mermaid* ed., 178).

[2] Fleay's identification of Jonson with the vicious Frenchman, John fo de King, in which he is followed, as usual, by Penniman, has nothing to recommend it. As regards the only situation in which any parallel has been suspected, John fo de King is represented not in a satirical light, but as having much the best of the affair.

that this comedy precipitated both the violent campaign of satire which filled the year 1601, and also the personal chastisement with which Jonson visited Marston.

The often ill-advised attempt to trace the workings of personal malice in this quarrel has in many cases caused too little attention to be given to another aspect of the controversy; namely, that which presents it as the outgrowth of corporate jealousy between two competing theatres. "The Poetaster," as well as "Cynthia's Revels" and "The Case Is Altered," was presented by the Children of her Majesty's Chapel, to whom Jonson had transferred his services from the Lord Chamberlain's Company after the production of "Every Man out of his Humor." "Satiromastix" was acted by the Chamberlain's Company (Shakespeare's) and also by the Children of Paul's, who seem at this period to have had some affiliation with the Chamberlain's Men. "Jack Drum's Entertainment" and probably "Histriomastix" were also performed by the Children of Paul's, like Marston's authentic early play of "Antonio and Mellida."

Both "Satiromastix" and "The Poetaster" contain sarcastic allusions to the rival place of entertainment. The former play gibes twice at the Chapel Children's *locale*, the Blackfriars Theatre; and "The Poetaster," performed in the latter place, reciprocates by satirizing Histrio's theatre (The Globe) on the other side of "Tyber" (*i. e.*, on the Bankside, opposite the city), where, instead of "Humors, Revels, and Satires," Tucca will find in the plays as much ribaldry as he can desire, and where, Histrio assures him, "all the sinners i' the suburbs come and applaud our action daily."

We do not know the cause of Jonson's alienation from the Chamberlain's Company about the beginning of 1600; but the change seems to have been accompanied with ill-feeling. It is noticeable that the direct attack upon Jonson began, according to all indications, at just this period; and it is certain that "The Poetaster" does not merely ridicule in Demetrius (Dekker) and Crispinus (Marston) single writers in the employ of the possibly allied companies of the Globe and Paul's. In Histrio and in a number of random allusions the play attacks the Chamberlain's Company as a whole.

The fact of definite hostility between the Globe Company and that of the Chapel Children is further proved by the famous allusions in the second act of "Hamlet."[1] Rosencrantz's description of the "aery of children" certainly refers to the Children of the Chapel, and forms a natural retort to Jonson's ridicule of the Chamberlain's Company in "The Poetaster." According to Rosencrantz, these children, given, as Tucca expresses it, to "nothing but Humors, Revels, and Satires, that gird and fart at the time," are "little eyases, that cry out on the top of question [deal with matters of the most absolutely contemporary interest?] and are most tyrannically clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages [so berate the adult companies?] that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills [Jonsonian ridicule], and dare scarce come thither."

There is no question, then, that sharp rivalry existed in 1601 between the professional actors of the Globe and Fortune (Henslowe's theatre) and the boy

[1] Scene 2, ll. 336 ff.

players of the Blackfriars private theatre, who acted under the special patronage of the queen, and who, as all the allusions show, were certainly attracting to their expensive performances a specially large proportion of the fashionable public. I do not believe, however, that sufficient evidence exists for Professor Wallace's assumption that the popularity of Blackfriars was seriously endangering the prosperity of the Globe.[1] Commercially speaking, plays like "Cynthia's Revels" and "The Poetaster" can hardly have been very formidable rivals to such notable successes as "Henry V," "Julius Cæsar," and "Hamlet," even when we make the greatest possible allowance for the current topical interest of the former. The Blackfriars Theatre also was relatively small, and appears to have been open only one night in the week.[2] Shakespeare's allusions to the success of the children, furthermore, to their carrying away "Hercules and his load too," as well as to the "throwing about of brains" in the theatrical war and the nation's desire that the poet and the player should go "to cuffs in the question," are far from showing any sense of personal defeat or bitterness. On the contrary, these allusions are the good-natured tribute of the assured master to amateur cleverness. Appearing in a play acted a few months probably after "Satiromastix," they indicate how serene Shakespeare had been left by the theatrical dispute and all the personalities involved in it.

Both in the first quarto (1603) and in the final

[1] Cf. C. W. Wallace, *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars, 1597–1603*, chapters xiii and xiv.

[2] See the account in the Duke of Stettin's diary (September, 1602), quoted by Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

(Folio) version of "Hamlet," the company of adult players is represented as travelling to Elsinore because the fantastic humors of the children have captured the metropolis. This circumstance, indispensable to the plot of the drama, has, of course, in itself no necessary topical significance whatever. Yet it seems likely on other grounds that an actual tour of Shakespeare's company toward the end of 1601 is alluded to; and the fact of this journey makes it possible, I think, to bring the play of "Hamlet" into connection with the only piece of real evidence concerning the "War of the Theatres" hitherto unmentioned.

It is probable that "The Poetaster," "Satiromastix," and "Hamlet" were all first produced in 1601, and in the order named.[1] Still later doubtless in the same year, during the Christmas season, the students of St. John's College, Cambridge, performed the second part of "The Return from Parnassus," the last member of a curious trilogy, partly realistic and partly allegorical in nature. In Act IV, scene 3, occurs one of the most important of all the contemporary allu-

[1] It must be confessed that the precise date of *Hamlet*, whether 1601 or 1602, is still somewhat doubtful. However, the entry of the play on the Stationers' Register, July 26, 1602, "as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes" suggests that the first London run of the play was then over. Printers who could publish an edition of a play still current on the boards seldom failed to advertise that fact. Cf. title-page to Wilkins's *Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607), "As it is *now* playd by his Maiesties Seruants." I believe that the first acting of *Hamlet* can safely be pushed back to the autumn of 1601. It should be noted that the allusion to Christmas (I, i, 158–165), sometimes taken as dating the play, has in both the quartos very much the appearance of a later interpolation.

sions to Shakespeare. The words are placed in the mouth of the famous actor, William Kemp: "Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down — ay, and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit."

This is the last significant reference to the War of the Theatres, and it has been variously explained. "Troilus and Cressida," as an obscure satirical comedy of the same approximate period, has been most frequently selected for the "purge" with which Shakespeare answered Jonson's "Poetaster." Upon sober consideration, however, it is hardly possible to find, either in the figure of Ajax or elsewhere in the play, any reliable indication of anti-Jonsonian purpose. Still less likely, I think, are the other alternatives: that Shakespeare wrote a lost play against Jonson; and that the author of the "Return from Parnassus," who shows a very glib knowledge of contemporary literature, ascribed to Shakespeare the "Satiromastix" of Dekker.

I do not know that the reference to the purge in this Cambridge play has been definitely associated hitherto with the fact that "Hamlet" was acted, as the title-page of the first quarto (1603) tells us, not only in London, but "also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere."[1] This announce-

[1] Professor E. B. Reed ("The College Element in Hamlet," *Mod. Phil.*, vi, 1909) connects the two plays, assigning the priority to the Cambridge piece. Professor Boas (*Cambridge History*, VI, ch. xii) partially accepting Reed's theory, suggests Christmas, 1602 (N. S.), rather than 1601 as the date of the second part of *The Return from*

ment, together, with the mention in the text itself of the travelling of the players, seems to point to a tour of the Globe Company before the end of 1601. Now the allusion to the "Purge" in the "Return from Parnassus" is of such a nature as to make it almost certain that the audience fully understood the reference. I believe that the passage was intended to recall some clearly expressed rebuke of Jonson in the text of "Hamlet" as recently acted in Cambridge. To be sure, as the latter play is preserved, it contains no distinct anti-Jonsonian stroke; but that fact is easily explained. It should be remembered that the earliest (1603) version of "Hamlet" contains only an excessively abbreviated mention of the theatrical war; while the later quartos of 1604, etc., though certainly based on the true complete copy, purposely omit the twenty most significant lines concerning the "little eyases." The reason for the non-appearance of these lines in all editions except the 1623 Folio, is obviously the same as that which prevented Jonson from publishing his Apologetical Dialogue to "The Poetaster" in the 1602 edition of that play; namely, the "Restraint by Authority" of which Jonson expressly complains.

When the collective editions of Jonson and Shakespeare were issued, in 1616 and 1623 respectively, there was no longer any necessity of suppressing general allusions to the long-past quarrel of the theatres. But there did exist the strongest reason why Shakespeare's editors should not have cared to give wanton offence to the most influential poet of the day, the generous

Parnassus. On this last assumption the earlier date of *Hamlet* would be certain.

supporter of their enterprise, by restoring excised and forgotten bits of personal ridicule. I believe, therefore, that the purge which made Jonson bewray his credit, the blow with which Shakespeare closed the War of the Theatres, was to be found in "Hamlet" as that play was presented in Cambridge, London, and elsewhere, in 1601–1602. I believe that it lay in the power of Shakespeare's literary executors, Heming and Condell, to preserve this passage, as they preserved the general quizzing of the little eyases, in their authoritative edition of the play. There can be no doubt, however, that in leaving to oblivion such a piece of transitory satire, which, even though not very unfriendly, may have been very humiliating to Jonson, the editors would have been faithfully observing the wish of the dead poet and the obvious proprieties of the situation. In view of the magnificent eulogy which Jonson was even at the moment contributing to their edition, the raking up of animosities of twenty years' standing would have been nothing short of unpardonable.

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TEXT AND COMMENTARY

I. Plays representing Contemporary Murders

Arden of Feversham, 1592. Reprinted 1599, 1633. For list of later editions and commentary, see *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*. The play has recently been reprinted in "Everyman's Library" (*Pre-Shakespearean Tragedies*).

A Warning for Fair Women. "Acted by the right Honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruantes," 1599. *Reprinted* R. Simpson, *The School of Shakspere*, vol. ii, 1878.

Yarington, Robert: Two Lamentable Tragedies. "The one, of the murther of Maister Beech a Chaundler in Thames-streete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry," 1601. *Reprinted*, A. H. Bullen, *Old Plays*, iv, 1885. *Discussion:* R. A. Law, "Yarington's 'Two Lamentable Tragedies,'" *Modern Language Review*, v (1910), 167–177.

A Yorkshire Tragedy. "Acted by his Maiesties Players at the Globe. Written by W. Shakspeare," 1608. Reprinted 1619, and in the third and fourth Shakespeare Folios (1664, 1685). For later editions and commentary, see *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*.

II. Plays indirectly influenced by Contemporary Murders

Wilkins, George: The Miseries of Enforced Marriage. "As it is now playd by his Maiesties Seruants, 1607. Other

editions, 1611, 1629, 1637. Reprinted, *Dodsley*, all editions; *Ancient British Drama*, vol. ii, 1810.

HEYWOOD, THOMAS: **A Woman Killed with Kindness**, 1607. Another edition, 1617. *Reprinted*, Reed's and Collier's *Dodsley; Ancient British Drama*, ii, 1810; Heywood's Works, *Mermaid* edition, etc.

III. PLAYS RELATING TO THE WAR OF THE THEATRES

DEKKER, THOMAS: **Satiromastix.** "Or The vntrussing of the Humorous Poet. As it hath bin presented publikely, by the Right Honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants; and priuately, by the Children of Paules," 1602. *Reprinted:* T. Hawkins, *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. iii, 1773; Works of Dekker, ed. Pearson, 1873; H. Scherer, *Materialien*, xx, 1907. Edition by J. H. Penniman announced in *Belles Lettres* series (with *Poetaster*).

JONSON, BEN: **Poetaster.** "Or The Arraignment: As it hath beene sundry times priuately acted in the Blacke Friers, by the children of her Maiesties Chappell," 1602. Reprinted in 1616 and later editions of Jonson's works. (For bibliography to **The Case is Altered**, **Every Man Out of his Humor**, and **Cynthia's Revels**, which have only an indirect connection with the controversy, see p. 416 ff.)

MARSTON, JOHN?: **Histriomastix.** "Or, the Player whipt," 1610. *Reprinted*, R. Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, vol. ii, 1878. (Marston's conjectural share in this play cannot extend beyond the mere revision of a work by another hand.)

Jack Drum's Entertainment. "Or The Comedie Of Pasquill and Katherine. As it hath bene sundry times plaide by the Children of Powles," 1601. (Marston's authorship doubtful.) *Reprinted*, R. Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, vol. ii.

What You Will, 1607. (Connection with the controversy vague.) *Reprinted* in Marston's Works, ed. Halliwell, 1856: ed. A. H. Bullen, 1887.

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM: **Troilus and Cressida**, 1609 (two issues). (Connection with the controversy doubtful.)

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. "As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where," 1603. (Abbreviated and corrupted version.) An-

other edition, "Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie," 1604. Reprinted 1605, 1611, 1637, etc.

The Return from Parnassus. "Or The Scourge of Simony. Publiquely acted by the Students in Saint Iohns Colledge in Cambridge," 1606. For further bibliography, see next chapter, p. 420.

CHAPTER XI

REALISTIC COMEDY

THE last chapter in the history of the true Elizabethan drama is that which describes the acceptance into the highest theatrical favor of plays occupied primarily with the treatment of contemporary manners and vices. The sudden overwhelming popularity after 1600 of that comedy of class types and distinctively local application, which Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humor" (1598) perhaps inaugurated, is eloquent of changed conditions both on the stage and in the life of London. It indicates, on the one hand, the disappearance of the catholic largeness of view which generally universalizes and idealizes Elizabethan plays; and it bears witness to the breaking up of the national unity of the earlier simpler age into the strongly marked social and factional groups of Stuart England.

Properly considered, the stage of Elizabeth's reign was far more realistic — more adequately expressive of national life and character — than any which succeeded it; but, like all agents of legitimate realism, it reflected rather the fundamental moral and intellectual content than the material superficialities of the epoch. The growing consciousness of personal peculiarities of manner, and the tendency of the drama to devote its highest talent and most careful art to the treatment of the commonplaces of everyday existence were necessarily consequent upon a diminution in the earlier emo-

tional and imaginative ardor. It is in literature as in life: minute interest in external details and in whimsicalities of speech or fashion seldom coexists with the intensest moral zeal or mental aspiration.

Not only is seventeenth-century drama less exalted in tone than that which we may properly call Elizabethan; it is also far less universal in its scope. One of the most potent literary influences in the age of Elizabeth was the essential unity of taste, produced by the sudden development of national feeling which, in spite of the superficial lines of cleavage, made prince and peasant really one in sentiment, character, and manner, and gave to the society of the time much of the *naïveté* and simple directness of primitive communities. This feature of the age is everywhere reflected in the drama. The academic imitations of foreign aristocratic species never achieved real success, even with the higher classes, till they had been so modified as to appeal to the tastes of the general public.[1] During the heyday of English drama, the twenty years following 1590, plays were incessantly being transported from the popular stage to the royal court, and back again; and those which most gained the applause of the rabble in the pit were nearly always the favorites also of the learned and noble connoisseurs.

Social distinctions were felt by the Elizabethans as political barriers, indispensable to good government and therefore rigidly to be maintained; but there is no

[1] The sole exception to this statement is to be found in the earlier comedies of Lyly; and these plays owed their hold upon fashionable audiences less to purely dramatic features than to their connection with courtly gossip.

evidence that the age connected differences of character in any clear way with differences of station or employment. The social democracy of the time is constantly exemplified, to a degree often perplexing to the modern reader, in the dramas of Shakespeare and his contemporaries: in the motley society of the Henry IV plays and "The Merchant of Venice"; in the frank independence of the gardener in "Richard II," the grave-digger in "Hamlet," the sergeant in "Macbeth"; and in the freedom everywhere accorded to the clown. The nobleman, the shepherd, and the merchant might meet on terms of at least temporary equality, not only on the stage, but in actual life as well; and the extreme haziness of the lines which mark the various gradations in dignity between the Dean of St. Paul's, Sir Thomas Gresham the merchant prince, Hobson the haberdasher, and John Goodfellow the pedlar in Heywood's play [1] is no very inaccurate picture of existing conditions. For the Elizabethans, consequently, tragic and comic effect were both absolute. They resulted from the character of the individual, and had nothing to do with the rank to which he belonged or the measure in which he followed the rules of established fashion. Even the most topical dramas of this period are in no sense limited to a special class. The authors of the murder plays found equal material for tragedy in the fate of the humble shop-keeper Beech, the city merchant Sanders, and the country gentlemen Arden and Calverley.

Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, however, there began to appear a change in the structure of society which became a characteristic feature of

[1] *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, Part II.

Jacobean life, and served to distinguish the entire Stuart drama from that of the Tudors. About 1600, as the all-absorbing excitement of the Spanish wars gave place to the general conviction of national security, and the flux of political and social adjustment consequent upon the Renaissance came to a stable equilibrium, the lines between the different ranks of the people grew hard and rigid; and the world of fashion evolved a code of manners complex and artificial to a degree previously unknown. The opposition between the court and city circles and between town and country habits was sharply, even bitterly, accentuated; and the stage, which had interpreted life in terms of universal significance, became the mirror of local prejudice and the scourge of social folly. Thus it happened that the Elizabethan drama, which in its power of expressing general communal feeling is continually reminiscent of the great national tragedy of Athens, was succeeded by a type of comedy suggestive rather of the narrow urban life portrayed by the Roman dramatists. It is therefore no accident that the first years of the seventeenth century witnessed a sudden burst of direct Plautine and Terentian imitation more striking even than that caused by the original introduction of those authors to English playwrights. The stifling atmosphere of over-ripe civilization pictured by the Latin plagiarists of the decadent Greek comedians — in which wit consists in the portrayal of clever knavery and the ridicule of the maladroit and unfashionable — was largely unintelligible to Udall. But by the time of James's accession, London manners had become far more intricate and self-conscious; and the greatest comic artists of that era,

Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Middleton, often follow close in the path of Terence, producing thus a drama which is less truly a continuation of the Elizabethan method than a foreshadowing of Restoration tendencies.

In tragedy also the change in the times made itself felt: for example, in the cult of unnatural horror, in the removal of the plot from the realm of ordinary human sympathy and acquaintance, and in the growing inclination to represent the main figures as conventional dignitaries in conventional romantic cities. But in tragedy, the practice of Shakespeare maintained the old standards till after the Jacobean age was well inaugurated; whereas, in comedy, we can detect even before the death of Elizabeth the beginnings of the distinctively Stuart method.

The great exponent of the genuine Elizabethan attitude toward realistic comedy is Shakespeare, who portrays with unsurpassed truth the characters and incidents of average contemporary life, but always for the purpose of relieving and interpreting a higher ideal theme. For this poet and for the age whose spirit he voiced, the world of commonplace actuality was never dissociated from the world of lofty achievement and romantic beauty. Though, like his princely hero, he does not fail to "remember the poor creature, small beer," [1] life and humanity are for him invariably possessed of a nobler meaning than can be discerned by the self-deluded realist, Iago, or many soullessly objective authors of Jacobean comedy. Thus, Shakespeare's plays always infer, behind the material phenomena of existence, — the suckling of fools and chronicling of

[1] *2 Henry IV*, II, ii, 10.

small beer, — moral and imaginative issues which determine the dramatic standards of value and inspire the answer to every problem presented.

In Shakespeare's earliest independent play, "Love's Labor's Lost," he draws very largely upon the absurdities of the life about him, mimicking familiar country types in Costard, Dull, Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel, while in Armado and the various lords and ladies he ridicules the passing whims of courtly society. So in "Much Ado About Nothing," the comedy which shows most kinship with "Love's Labor's Lost," [1] the plebeian buffoonery of Dogberry and Verges is likewise accompanied by the attempt to imitate in the dialogue of Beatrice and Benedick the wit and badinage of contemporary high life. In both these plays, however, the realism is a matter of mood and character rather than of microscopic external detail; and in both it is subordinated to a romantic intrigue plot.

Shakespeare's mature treatment carries the humors and incidents of ordinary life even farther into the sphere of universal truth. In his greatest plays the realistic and fanciful elements are perfectly blended and mutually complementary. No longer products of antipodal regions of thought or opposite points of view, they become in his philosophy the warp and woof from whose intertwining threads the fabric of true life must in every age be woven. Thus he cuts realistic drama adrift from the limitations of space and time, and uses the mass of observation concerning the

[1] There appears to be much better cause than it is now usual to allow for identifying *Much Ado* in an earlier form with the *Love's Labor Won* of Meres and regarding it as a twin drama to *Love's Labor's Lost.*

superficialities of character and action, which he had culled in London and Stratford, to picture forth as occasion might demand either the Roman mobs of "Cæsar" and "Coriolanus," the rude mechanicals of Thesean Athens, the merry rogue of sea-girt Bohemia, or the Trinculo and Stephano of his enchanted island. This procedure is entirely expressive of the general Elizabethan spirit in its just indifference to petty anachronism and its great power of conceiving and vitalizing distant scenes. Artistically, also, it is wise and right. The high romantic passions can be analyzed and presented in many media; but the humbler, ephemeral details, which make up so much of life and so little of history, can ordinarily be realized only in one's immediate environment. Shakespeare's introduction into the midst of plays pitched among remote or fanciful surroundings of scenes in minor key, which reflect the monotone of existence in sixteenth-century England, is therefore no real breach of unity or consistency. On the contrary, it shows the dramatist's recognition of the great principle that life, at all times and under all conditions, is a coat of many colors never adequately represented by the few bright patches of which alone romance takes cognizance. And those precise readers offended by the sweaty nightcaps of the Roman rabble or the English ballad-mongering of the Bohemian Autolycus make thoughtless outcry against casual inconsistencies inherent in the full deep grasp of society as a whole which gives to the plays in question the truest realism in their eternal faithfulness to human nature.

This fundamental belief in the immutable complexity of life makes Shakespeare insist, on the one

hand, that cobblers and weavers must have had their place in the commonwealth of Cæsar or of Theseus, and that they must have reasoned and acted then much as in his own time. On the other hand, it causes him to give also to his individual comic figures a deep humanity which renders them more than the mere product of transitory conditions. Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Malvolio, Autolycus and the rest speak the intellectual language and exemplify the vices and prejudices of that particular London environment whose contact had taught Shakespeare to conceive them, and in terms of which alone he could convincingly depict their characters. Yet, like their creator, they are not of an age, but for all time. What the poet had learned, item by item, from personal experience of the world through which he walked, concerning the less acute issues of life, he gives forth in his humorous figures so digested and explained that it finds equal currency in bygone Britain and in visionary Illyria. And the reason for this is Shakespeare's abiding faith that in any society worth portraying, anywhere existent, the eccentric force of heroic and romantic aspiration must inevitably be held in balance by the sane power of that humorous or "realistic" tendency, which sees things as they are and does not look beyond actual conditions. For Shakespeare, therefore, realism is no mere by-product of his own generation, self-concerned and self-destructive, but an everlasting conservative force which keeps the world sweet and habitable. Falstaff and Mercutio are expressions of the *vis inertiæ* of civilization, which maintains the equilibrium of society against its revolutionary Hotspurs and Romeos. Thus Falstaff finds his logical unques-

tionable place in the world, whether we choose to think of him as Oldcastle, the companion of Henry V's youth, or as Fastolfe, the cowardly knight of Talbot's wars a generation later, or, disregarding history altogether, simply as the fat boon companion of Shakespeare's own day. In all that really matters his figure possesses as much truth in the earliest of these environments as in the latest; and the critic has little more reason to object to the employment of the street and tavern sights of 1600 for the purpose of realizing the character of a fifteenth-century epicure, than he would have for forbidding Cæsar, Hector, and Hamlet to speak English.

Thus, the trend of Shakespeare's dramatic practice set increasingly, as his genius developed, toward the utilization of what was accidental and ephemeral in the world around him for the demonstration of universal truth. More and more clearly he seems to have perceived that realism is as little as romance itself the necessary adjunct of a particular time and place; and his greatest realistic play, "King Lear," is a tragedy located, perhaps intentionally, at the farthest distance from the contemporary world. "Lear" is throughout a delineation, not of history or of heroic tragedy, but of the more domestic aspects in the relation of man to man, which each writer can understand only from sympathetic observation of the life before his window and which few have ever been able to reproduce save by means of the closest transcription. In Shakespeare's treatment, King Lear and his daughters lose the vague royal dignity which the earlier anonymous play on the same subject allows them, and become practically bourgeois types; while the kingdom of Britain could

be replaced without dramatic loss by a farm. "Macbeth" and "Othello," typical expressions of heroic tragedy, deal with the fate of supernormal figures, nature's aristocrats, overwhelmed by the most tremendous catastrophes: but "King Lear" is a parable of common life possible only for one whose eyes had been long fixed on the low average of human society, and designed to portray the hideous consequences attendant upon the ignoble faults of vulgar self-will and petty ingratitude. Lear, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia are all fundamentally creatures of the hard actual world; and their egotisms and bickering belong to the same type and have obviously the same source in contemporary observation as dozens of the cynical or satirical scenes in the city comedies of Jonson and Chapman. The unlovely aspects of human society when centred in self and unenlightened by the spark of romantic endeavor, furnished the ordinary seventeenth-century playwright with matter for merriment, or at best for satire; but Shakespeare has here shaped it into tragedy too deep for tears.

The realism of "King Lear" is the proper pendant to the idealism of "The Tempest." Both plays show the poet's sharp experience of the corroding meannesses of life and both testify to his triumph over their discouraging influence. The author's transference of his story, in "Lear," to the broad stage of myth and fiction enables him to give universal application to his picture of the unloveliness of that dwarfed and distorted human nature in which the theatre of his time was coming more and more to find material for careless laughter. The same transfer allows him scope for showing, as no writer has ever shown, before or since,

the high beneficent purpose behind this bleak world of envy and self-interest. With a freedom hardly conceivable in any reproduction of temporal and local conditions, he here demonstrates the refinement of the originally faulty or unripened characters of Lear and Cordelia on the rack of partly self-imposed suffering into the noblest, tenderest, and most perfect types of mortal being.

Only in a single play of his maturity — probably of his entire career — does Shakespeare give any indication of following the bent of the time in concentrating attention upon the humorous detail of life without reference to its proper function as the interpreter and corrective of more idealistic tendencies. "The Merry Wives of Windsor" stands out conspicuous in the list of Shakespeare's works as the only play which the poet localizes in the England of his own age, even as it is the only one in which interest in ludicrous situation finally predominates over the graver ends of characterization and philosophy of life. It is, indeed, far from being a narrowly realistic comedy after the model of the popular "comedy of manners." The humor of Falstaff and the merry wives is, upon the whole, clean and hearty; the slight underplot of Anne Page and Fenton adds a welcome dash of romance; and the fairy machinery of the last act is pretty obviously introduced for the purpose of freshening the close atmosphere of scheming and deceit. Yet the play undoubtedly indicates a departure in the direction of that species of comedy which arises by the evaporation out of life of its grosser details, and which, in the face of Shakespeare's general protest, was growing more and more fashionable.

There is every reason for accepting the essential truth of the story, reported by Dennis and Rowe,[1] that the "Merry Wives" was composed in haste to the special order of Queen Elizabeth, who demanded to see Falstaff in love. The standard of taste which would prompt such a desire was easily intelligible to Shakespeare, and within certain limitations he seems not to have been above gratifying it.[2] The suspicion lies very strong that in this comedy the character of Falstaff has suffered foul play with the entire privity of the author. One may borrow the words spoken of Oldcastle in the Epilogue to "Henry IV" (Part II) and say that Falstaff "died a martyr" in "Henry V," "and this is not the man." We have seen how the irresistible figure of the true Falstaff — the incomparable expression of supreme intellect focussed upon the physical details of life — swelled out the Henry IV plays beyond their normal size, and came near to swamping entirely their serious purpose. It would seem likely that Shakespeare has taken the opportunity in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" of effectually cutting the throat of this lovable but ungovernable giant by an intentional travesty of his character, which pleased without inflaming the vulgar appetite of the public. Thus, the play would remain an historical document measuring very accurately both the strength of the general demand, about 1599, for realistic comedy and also the attitude of Shakespeare toward the type.

[1] See N. Smith, *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, 1903, 5 and 304.

[2] The most notable examples of Shakespeare's occasional willingness to sacrifice art in the interest of popular appeal are probably the unnatural situations presented in the closing acts of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Measure for Measure*.

The evolution of realistic comedy as a distinct dramatic species was the result of a tendency to isolate and catalogue the peculiarities of the various classes of contemporary society. The developed comedy of this sort gained its ends almost solely by caricature of types rather than by individual portraiture; but during the last five or six years of Elizabeth's reign the species took its rise from a very miscellaneous set of performances.

Undoubtedly, Ben Jonson is in the highest degree responsible for this comedy, as regards both the structural form which it took and the critical principles upon which it was based. Quite simultaneously with Jonson's earliest comedies appeared, however, several by George Chapman, which exemplify in less positive and influential form many of the same general tendencies. Chapman agreed with Jonson in being both a scholar and a frequent imitator of the classics. The plays of these writers gave the situations and the stock characters of Plautus and Terence remarkable frequence on the early seventeenth-century stage, imbuing realistic comedy with a certain Latin coloring which is distinguishable not merely in actual imitations like "All Fools" and "The Alchemist," but even also in such essentially original works as "Eastward Hoe" and "Bartholomew Fair."

The first comedies of Chapman and Jonson contain only incidental suggestions of the realistic method. Chapman's "Blind Beggar of Alexandria," which may have been composed as early as 1596, is in point of structure a monstrous absurdity. A sensational tragic theme, dealing with the ingenious villainies of a shepherd's son in fourfold disguise, is suddenly brought

to an entirely unsatisfactory comic conclusion. The main story is as far removed from actual fact as it is from the requirements of art; yet the treatment of the three bourgeois sisters in their quest and experience of matrimony brings into the play a fitful glimpse of London realism, and suggests many more developed portraits of the same type.

Two early plays of Ben Jonson illustrate the formative stage in that poet's comic method. "The Case Is Altered" is in the main an attractive piece of romantic apprentice work, based upon the old motive of infant confusion, which was early introduced from Latin and Italian drama.[1] The most individual part of the play, however, and the only part which has significance in the light of Jonson's later career, is that dealing with the subsidiary humors of Juniper the cobbler, Peter Onion, and their companions.

"A Tale of a Tub" is a far more Jonsonian work than "The Case Is Altered." It concerns itself exclusively with contemporary London types, most of which are presented with real wit and appreciation. Limiting its action strictly to the compass of a single day and to the immediate suburbs of London, the play develops rather amusingly a thin story of mutual deceit and misunderstanding. The date of this piece is somewhat uncertain. It was not printed till three years after Jonson's death,[2] but it seems to have been composed in its earliest form before the end of the sixteenth cen-

[1] The original source of this theme was doubtless the *Captivi* of Plautus, which was directly imitated in *The Case Is Altered.* The same motive had been employed with variations in *The Bugbears, Misogonus,* and *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall.*

[2] In the 1640 Folio edition of his works.

tury. Immaturity appears in the attempt to offer a mere series of comic situations in place of an ordered plot, and in the failure to endow the figures with any really representative value. In these respects "A Tale of a Tub," like Porter's overrated "Two Angry Women of Abingdon" (1599) of the same approximate date, bears less relationship to the realistic comedy of Jonson's maturity than to unreasoned earlier efforts at plebeian farce such as "Gammer Gurton's Needle" and "Misogonus."

For a number of years there existed a parallel and a rather close connection between the dramatic careers of Chapman and Jonson. Both appear first as hack writers for Henslowe's company, and it is difficult to distinguish between their early theories of comedy. Professor Parrott has remarked [1] that Jonson constructed his "Case Is Altered" out of the "Captivi" and "Aulularia" of Plautus in the very same year in which Chapman was similarly fusing the plots of two Terentian plays [2] in "All Fools." The idea of imitation in the ordinary sense is here precluded by the radical difference between the plays in question. It is worth noting that "All Fools" would make no very surprising figure in the gallery of Jonsonian realism, — beside "Every Man in his Humor" and "Epicœne," for example. Conversely, "The Case Is Altered," which is strikingly opposed to Jonson's other work and was never openly avowed by that poet, shows considerable resemblance to several of Chapman's medleys of buffoonery and Latinized romance, such as "May Day" and "Monsieur D'Olive."

[1] Chapman's *All Fools and Gentleman Usher, Belles-Lettres* ed. p. xxxvi.

[2] Viz., *Heautontimorumenos* and *Adelphi.*

So, with reference to Jonson's peculiar speciality, the evolution of the "comedy of humors," Chapman appears concurrently in the field. It is hardly possible to decide whether the honor of prior exemplification of this type should rest with "Every Man in his Humor" or with the "Humorous Day's Mirth" of the other writer. The question is not one which can affect our ultimate judgment concerning the relative position of the two poets concerned. Chapman's "Humorous Day's Mirth," mentioned by Henslowe in May, 1597, as the "Comedy of Humors," is a piece of no distinction and of no perceptible influence in its own day; while Jonson's much better thought out and better constructed comedy created a new epoch in dramaturgy. It is by no means improbable that Jonson and Chapman worked side by side, with considerable exchange of ideas, from the time of their emergence as dramatic writers in the pay of Henslowe till after their formal collaboration in "Eastward Hoe" (1605). Being both poets of a scholarly and reflective temperament, they appear to have striven equally for the introduction upon the English stage of classic plot material and for the application to contemporary society of the neat if soulless scale of stock types upon which the Latin and Italian comedies were based. There is no indication, however, that Chapman ever attained to a permanent theory of comic composition or evolved any consistent method. Romance, which is often colorless, and blunt realism, which is not always humorously effective, huddle each other in his latest plays no less than in the earliest. Indeed, "All Fools," which in its original form would appear to have been one of the first of Chapman's comedies,

remains on the whole the most satisfactory in plot manipulation and in conception.

Thus Chapman seems to have lent to the progress of realistic comedy little more than the original half-blind impulse which helped to start it on its way. In the shaping of its course he took small part; and the main interest of his seven or eight [1] independent comedies for the student of dramatic evolution rests not in any consecutive advance which they made toward the final differentiation of a comedy of English types. It lies rather, as Professor Parrott has again suggested,[2] in the fact that his unprogressive series of plays, half-romantic and half-realistic, form a connecting medium between the frank heterogeneity of much undeveloped Elizabethan drama and the brilliant, but quite unlife-like and insincere blending of various interests in Fletcher's tragi-comedy.

Ben Jonson created realistic comedy as a distinct type with established laws and a clear-cut field of action. "Every Man in his Humor" translated into terms of contemporary life a number of the most successful characters of Plautine drama: the *miles gloriosus* in Bobadill, the intriguing slave in Brainworm, the riotous son and severe father in the Knowells. To these are added similar stock figures in the town and country gull, the merry magistrate, jealous husband, and "downright" country squire. "Every Man in his Humor" was perhaps the most sensational stage suc-

[1] *Eastward Hoe,* in which Chapman was aided by Jonson and Marston, is not included in this reckoning. The doubtful piece is *Sir Giles Goosecap* (1606), concerning which, see T. M. Parrott, *Modern Philology,* 1906.

[2] *All Fools and Gentleman Usher, Belles-Lettres* ed., p. xliv, ff.

cess of the close of the sixteenth century, and it taught the dramatists of the day to marshal human society into classes and genera instead of seeking to deal with the individual person. When this change had become complete, Elizabethan comedy had yielded place to Jacobean.

With the single exception of "Poetaster," a play of personal satire evoked by the "War of the Theatres," in 1601, all the comedies of Jonson published in the 1616 edition of his works are based upon this theory of class peculiarities or "humors," which Jonson steadily developed and made more and more capable of expressing the externalities of Stuart life. The growing skill of the poet in conveying a brilliant criticism of contemporary conditions by means of vaguely individualized model-figures reached its apex in the intricate anti-Puritan satire of "Bartholomew Fair," acted in 1614, but first published in the second Folio of 1640.

"Every Man in his Humor," as Jonson originally composed it, and as it was published in 1601, had an Italian setting. Before the appearance of the first Folio edition in 1616, the scene had been frankly shifted to London, and the Italian *dramatis personæ* rechristened Englishmen. This change has more significance than may appear, for realistic comedy only became an independent type when it restricted itself to the neighborhood of contemporary London and thus defeated the impulse to romantic contamination. The plays which blend careful sketches of English real life with alien non-realistic plots and foreign names belong in the main to the Elizabethan dramatic method, and are far more frequent before 1603 than after that date.

Such are, of course, the dramas of Shakespeare, who never gives realism undisputed control of his stage.

The transitional years, 1598–1603, produced a number of other comedies which cater to the rising interest in actual city types, while still clinging to the usual older themes as well. The most successful of these efforts to fuse the old style with the new is perhaps the "Patient Grissell" of Dekker, Chettle, and Haughton, which was acted early in 1600.[1] In this play, where the workmanship of Dekker is throughout very conspicuous, the meeting of the two spirits is so clear that it must impress the hastiest reader. The treatment of the delicate story of Griseldis and the presentation of the idyllic poverty of her father's household render the main plot an altogether charming example of Elizabethan romance. Dekker has nowhere given expression to the unpruned luxuriance of the Elizabethan imagination in finer verse than that of the Marquess's introductory eulogy on hunting: —

> "Oh! 't is a lovely habit, when green youth,
> Like to the flowery blossom of the spring,
> Conforms his outward habit to his mind.
> Look how yon one-ey'd waggoner of heaven
> Hath, by his horses' fiery-winged hoofs,
> Burst ope the melancholy jail of night;
> And with his gilt beams' cunning alchymy
> Turn'd all these clouds to gold, who, with the winds
> Upon their misty shoulders, bring in day.
> Then sully not this morning with foul looks,
> But teach your jocund spirits to ply the chase,
> For hunting is a sport for emperors."

Nor can there easily be found a more pleasing instance

[1] See *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Greg, vol. ii, 206, 207.

of the ultra-romantic treatment of humble life than in Janiculo's speech to his son: [1] —

> "Come, sit by me. While I work to get bread,
> And Grissil spin us yarn to clothe our backs,
> Thou shalt read doctrine to us for the soul.
> Then, what shall we three want? nothing, my son;
> For when we cease from work, even in that while,
> My song shall charm grief's ears, and care beguile."

So the clownish servant, Babulo, who waits upon Janiculo's family with a tenderness thinly disguised under witty impudence, is an essentially romantic creation, owing little to contemporary observation, and quite unfettered to any particular time or place. He belongs to the kindred of Touchstone, and has no connection with the Brainworms of the realistic school.

With this story of Griseldis, which forms in itself a perfect romantic comedy, has been combined an utterly different realistic plot centring about the Welsh widow Gwenthyan. The idea of relieving the excessive self-abasement of Grissell by the companion picture of a termagant wife is one which Chaucer would have approved; and the joining of the themes is rather skilfully effected. Nothing, however, has been done to conceal the entire dissimilarity of the two strains involved. Gwenthyan and her two suitors, Sir Owen ap Meredith and Emulo, are clearly realistic types after the new manner of Jonson. It seems impossible to doubt that Emulo is a conscious echo of Fastidious Brisk in "Every Man out of his Humor." Indeed, Emulo's fantastic account of his bloodless duel with Sir Owen [2] follows so close upon Jonson's description

[1] Collier's edition, 1841, p. 11.

[2] Ibid., pp. 40–42.

of the engagement between Brisk and Luculento ("Every Man out of his Humor," IV, iv), that it may fairly be held to pass the limits of justifiable imitation.

This bit of plagiarism, together with a mischievous allusion to the fact that the illiterate Emulo can "never be saved by his book," [1] may well have irritated Jonson and caused Dekker to be joined with Marston in the next year's satire of the "Poetaster" (1601). That Dekker was indeed mainly responsible for this sub-plot in the new realistic style of Jonson is pretty evident from the recurrence of the identical theme and figures in the Mistress Miniver and Sir Rees ap Vaughan episode of his "Satiromastix" (1601).

Jonsonian influence appears to have introduced a streak of realistic satire into a number of other motley plays produced during the last five years of Elizabeth's reign. The manuscript comedy of "Timon," first printed by Dyce in 1842, unites with a lighthearted treatment of the story of the Athenian misanthrope a Latinizing farce of stock types, among which occur such familiar figures as the covetous father and clownish son, the vain foolish lover, mischievous page, and wanton nurse. The source of this play, the circumstances of presentation, and its relation to Shakespeare's tragedy on the same subject are all matters of dispute. In the light of recent investigation, it seems probable that the play before us

[1] An allusion to pardon "by benefit of clergy," to which Jonson had owed his life in 1598. Compare the reference to "some that have been saved by their neck-verse" in connection with Horace (Jonson) in *Satiromastix* (Scherer's ed., l. 384).

— in spite of an air of academic exclusiveness which is carried even to the length of quoting Greek in the original — was known to Shakespeare, and that it supplied him with important elements in his tragedy which he could have procured from no other known source. The unknown author of "Timon," while standing creditor to Shakespeare, may have been debtor to Ben Jonson, for a remarkably close parallel has been lately pointed out between his sketches of Gelasimus and Pseudocheus and those of Amorphus and Asotus in "Cynthia's Revels." [1]

In the "Parnassus" plays — likewise academic productions of about the same date (1598–1601) — we can trace the gradual influence, if not of Jonson's personal example, certainly of the type of local comedy based on classic models, which Jonson individualized and established on the English stage. In the first play of the group, "The Pilgrimage to Parnassus," which was acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, about Christmas, 1597, we have a mere allegory of the various tasks and employments of college life, with no further attempt at comic effect than can be made out of local references to Hobson the carrier and "my hoste Johns of the Crowne." The two parts of "The Return from Parnassus," which complete the trilogy, (1600, 1601 ?) are conspicuous, on the other hand, for the increasing degree in which they subordinate the original allegorical motive to the delineation of real-

[1] See C. R. Baskervill, *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*, 268–272, and H. C. Hart, Jonson's Works, I, xliv. It should be said that the general character of the parallel passages seems to suggest a common source rather than deliberate imitation on the part of either English poet.

istic types. The first part of the "Return" contains a convincing scene between the Cambridge Draper, Tailor, and Inn-keeper, who meet to complain of students' bad debts. Gullio in the same play repeats the comedy of Master Matthew in "Every Man in his Humor," with his inanity, his absurd poetic ambition and his pilfered tags of verse; while a life-like passage describing Ingenioso's visit to his Patron handles with admirable fidelity a situation otherwise treated but hardly improved in "The Puritan."

In the second part of the "Return," the symbolical story of Ingenioso, Judicio, Studioso, Academico, etc., is so complicated by realistic additions of every kind as to be almost entirely unintelligible. It is everywhere obvious that the interest of the author has been distracted from the general allegorical framework of the piece to the series of ironic studies of contemporary manners which he has embroidered upon it; and the unique value of this curious play results from the candor with which it devotes itself to the delineation and criticism of present conditions in a very great number of the avenues of life.

The recently recovered play of "Club Law," assigned by its editor to a date (1599–1600) about level with that of the second member of the "Parnassus" group, illustrates with equal vividness the satirical propensities of the Cambridge undergraduate stage. It is not possible, however, to bring "Club Law" into any such direct relationship with the drama at large as the last two Parnassus plays everywhere exhibit. "Club Law" owes its peculiar interest to its frankly occasional nature. Instead of treating general types of character, it aims its satire at unpopular individuals

among the Cambridge townsmen; and it thus has its *raison d'être*, not in the philosophic analysis of existing society, which was becoming more and more the theme of professional London comedy, but in the mere gratification of academic pique.

Two other plays, which belong presumably to the very last years of Elizabeth, mark the transition to realistic comedy. Both are shown by the large number of extant editions to have been among the most popular performances of the time with the reading public. One of these plays, "Wily Beguiled," was first printed in 1606, the year in which the second part of "The Return from Parnassus" appeared, and, like the other piece, was acted probably several years earlier. That "Wily Beguiled" was originally an academic play is almost certain, in spite of its broad general vogue later, from the glee with which the triumph of the poor scholar over his worldly rivals is depicted, and from the excessive affectation of much of the verse. College dilettantism may be responsible for the presence of two good songs as well as for the large number of instances of verbal plagiarism and the incongruous introduction of Sylvanus, Nymphs, and Satyrs. The chief interest of the play consists, however, in the realistic scenes which deal with Gripe, Churms, Plod-All, and Will Cricket. As regards these scenes, "Wily Beguiled" occupies an important halfway position between Lyly's Latinized comedy of "Mother Bombie," which our play much resembles in plot, and the mature Stuart plays of English real life.

"A Pleasant conceited Comedie, Wherein is shewed how a Man may Choose a good Wife from a Bad" has been ascribed on insubstantial grounds to Thomas

Heywood.[1] This play, like "Wily Beguiled," is distinguished by its unblushing plagiarism; and the most memorable thing about it is perhaps the travesty of the potion story in "Romeo and Juliet." The figures in the comedy, though all nominally English and contemporary, are depicted either vaguely or with undue exaggeration; nor is the plot construction sufficiently good to reflect credit upon the dramatic taste of the seventeenth century, which required seven editions within thirty-three years. The play's hold on the public doubtless lay in the absurdities of the clownish school-master, Sir Aminadab, and in the sentimental presentation of the trials of the patient wife, — a theme apparently popular at this time and similarly treated in "The London Prodigal."

With the curious symmetry which not infrequently characterizes literary movements, it happened that the efflorescence of Stuart realism in comedy coincided precisely with the beginning of James I's reign. The plays just considered, belonging to the last five years of the Tudor period, are all experimental in character; and, with the exception of "Every Man in his Humor," they all contain nearly or quite as much of the Elizabethan as of the later spirit. Even in Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humor" and "Cynthia's Revels" (1601), we have elaborate preliminary studies in type portraiture rather than finished dramas in the new style.

The four or five years immediately subsequent to James I's accession in 1603 are remarkable for an extraordinary outburst of realistic comedy. To the years 1603–1608 belong "The London Prodigal" and "The

[1] See Fleay, *Biog. Chron. Eng. Drama*, i, 289 f.

Puritan" (1607), "Eastward Hoe" by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, the "Westward Hoe" and "Northward Hoe" of Dekker and Webster, and Jonson's "Volpone." The same years saw the production also of five admirable comedies by Middleton, who ranks with Jonson as the finest exponent of Stuart realism: "Michaelmas Term" (1607), "A Trick to Catch the Old One" (1608), "The Family of Love" (1608), "Your Five Gallants" (registered, March, 1608), and "A Mad World, My Masters."

No true parallel to any of these plays can be found among the productions of the real Elizabethans. Yet these form the most distinct and vigorous class of drama produced by the younger poets in the eight or nine years (1603–1611/12) during which Shakespeare was triumphantly maintaining the old catholic art upon the Globe stage in the face of a general yielding elsewhere to more temporary interests. With the single exception of "Volpone," the principal scene of these plays is always London. Without any exception, the group is characterized by a restriction of view to the most tangible and superficial phenomena of worldly experience. Just in proportion as Jonson and his fellows acquired their consummate mastery in interpreting the actual impressions of eye and ear, they lost touch with the inner voice of ideal fancy. Thus, the imagination, divorced from reason and observation, was left to find expression in works of dishonest sentiment and morbid horror.

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CHAPTER XII

THE NATURE OF ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The more important devices of staging and of histrionic practice which accompanied the development of the Tudor drama up to the date of Elizabeth's accession have been discussed in the earlier chapters of this book. It remains necessary — before attempting to sketch in some sort the general spirit of the later drama of our period — to mention briefly the external changes and innovations to which the theatre managers resorted during the last thirty or forty years of the sixteenth century in their breathless effort to keep pace with the unparalleled growth in the popularity and complexity of their wares.

We have seen that a distinction was clearly recognized as early as 1530 between the indoor and outdoor performance of plays,[1] and that the interlude of this period developed with especial regard to the needs of indoor, semi-private and aristocratic presentation. When Elizabeth came to the throne, in 1558, the case was much the same. There still co-existed open-air plays for the general public and indoor performances for the élite. The conditions of private staging had grown far more elaborate, however, in the interval. The *locale*, for which any gentleman's house seems previously to have been sufficient, was now generally fixed in one of the royal palaces of Whitehall or Greenwich, in the great dining halls of the Oxford and Cam-

[1] See p. 69 f.

bridge colleges or the London Inns of Court, or occasionally at the residence of some great noble. The accounts of the Revels Office bear clear witness to the constantly increasing gorgeousness and expensiveness of such entertainments.[1] Each decade saw enormously amplified the requisition of money and properties to adorn the stage or dress the performers, and the wasteful tendency exhausted itself finally only in the wild crushing extravagance of the Jacobean masque. The heightened repute of private theatricals is likewise indicated by the rise of companies of amateur performers by the side of the old professional bands. Such seem to have been ordinarily the actors in the collegiate plays, and so the various children's companies of choir-boys should doubtless be considered during all the first part of the reign. Through the entire quarter century following the Queen's accession all that was most significant or progressive in English drama expressed itself in these private and occasional performances. Practically every important play of this time — "Ferrex and Porrex," "Roister Doister," "Gammer Gurton's Needle," "The Supposes" and "Jocasta," "Gismond of Salerne," "The Misfortunes of Arthur," "The Arraignment of Paris," and the early comedies of Lyly — appeared to meet the growing needs and aspirations of the indoor stage.

The popular, outdoor theatre, on the other hand, remained for many years after Elizabeth's accession on the same low level of development which we have found illustrated a full century before in the *mise en scène* of the vulgarized morality, "Mankind." The

[1] Cf. A. J. Kempe, *Loseley MSS.*, and A. Feuillerat, *Revels' Accounts, passim.*

professional actors, all the most reputable of whom reserved their best efforts for private exhibition in the presence of noble or royal patrons, were indeed content to increase their profits by such performances before the rabble as could be arranged without special preparation or outlay. But nearly twenty years of the Queen's reign passed before the appearance of any disposition to consider the particular requirements and opportunities of the popular stage. In the mean time, the public was offered casual amusement in the open-air theatres which chance had provided, and which we have found the rustic mountebanks of "Mankind" already employing, — namely, in the uncovered courtyards of the inns. The assemblages here collected were regaled either with the rudest effusions of traditional clownage and melodrama, or else with the leavings of the more cultured audiences, — plays intended distinctly for private presentation, which the actors happened to have already in their répertoire or which they desired to rehearse in view of some contemplated private performance. Thus it happens that, while the fashionable private drama is found making continuous and serious, if not always successful, effort at artistic improvement, the career of the popular stage remains till about 1585 a practical blank; and the national drama bursts forth into immediate and unheralded bloom only when the great events of the last years of the eighties had caused a fusion between the interests of the public and private stages.

The reason for the earlier backwardness of the drama of the people is very largely sociological, an outgrowth of the peculiar status of the actor. The relation of the Tudor government, uninfluenced by Puritanical bias,

YARD OF THE FOUR SWANS INN, BISHOPSGATE

Illustrating the usual scene of popular dramatic performances before 1575

toward professional entertainers is well indicated by the phraseology of a letter from the Lord Mayor of London to the Lord Chancellor,[1] in which the writer reminds his lordship "that the players of playes which are vsed at the Theatre and other such places and tumblers and such like, are a very superfluous sort of men, and of suche facultie as the lawes haue disalowed." The disallowance of the laws during the earlier part of the reign arose, thus, not from moral considerations, but from the "superfluousness" of the class of actors; *i. e.*, their lack of social responsibility, and the difficulty of fitting them closely into that careful gradation of rank and mutual dependence which Tudor policy regarded as the only safeguard against riot and sedition. It was this feeling which prompted the statutes of 14 and 39 Elizabeth (1571, 1596), requiring "all Fencers, Bearewardes, comon Players of Enterludes and Minstrelles wandring abroade" on pain of prosecution as vagabonds, to secure the patronage of some member of the nobility and thus subject themselves to more or less effectual control.[2] In their legal consequences these laws were, indeed, of far less importance than it has been usual to believe them. They merely sought to universalize a connection which had been very frequent since before the beginning of the Tudor period, and it is unreasonable to infer that they entirely succeeded in their purpose. On the contrary, the very reënactment of the statute in more stringent form would rather indicate, like the

[1] Dated April 12, 1580. Reprinted in "The Remembrancia," *Malone Society* "Collections," i, 46.

[2] For the text of these statutes, see W. C. Hazlitt, *The English Drama and Stage*, 1869, 21–23, 37 f.

repeated prohibition of plays by the mediæval church, that the abuse continued. Outside the policed districts of London, if not within them, it is probable that unlicensed actors, as well as "sturdy beggars" and vagabonds of other kinds maintained among the lower classes their illegal traffic.

In its bearing upon the history of the stage, the attitude of the government was, however, decidedly important. On the one hand, by discrediting all players not directly connected with the nobility, it necessarily limited the activities of the boycotted class to crude and surreptitious performance, and so made the evolution of a serious popular drama from this source impossible. On the other hand, these laws, together with the increasing opposition of the London corporation, greatly enhanced the value to the privileged companies of their relation to their noble patrons, and for a very considerable period caused them to regard the satisfaction of popular audiences as a matter altogether subsidiary to their continuance in favor and reputation before the courtly circle, for whose applause, moreover, they were obliged to compete keenly with the entirely private bands of amateurs.

That the bond between the patron and the public entertainers under his protection was throughout Elizabeth's reign, and particularly during the first thirty years of it, something considerably stronger than the legal fiction which it has been called [1] is indicated by several kinds of evidence: for example, by the intimate connection of the various Lords Chamberlain with their respective companies; [2] and by

[1] See F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, i, 143.

[2] See E. K. Chambers, "The Elizabethan Lords Chamberlain," *Malone Society* "Collections," i, 31 ff.

Leicester's recommendation to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord President of the North, of his "servauntes — plaiers of interludes," for whom he requests, in June, 1559, liberty of performing in Yorkshire, "being honest men, and suche as shall plaie none other matters (I trust) but tollerable and convenient, whereof some of them have bene herde here (*i. e.*, at Westminster) alreadie before diverse of my Lordis."[1] A like intimate relation is suggested by Leicester's personal accompaniment of his players to Germany in 1585, and by the very frank and spirited letter written by Leicester's brother, the Earl of Warwick (July 23, 1582) to the Lord Mayor in behalf of his "servant," John David, a professional master of defence, alleged to have been discriminated against in his purpose of giving a public exhibition at the Bull in Bishopsgate.[2]

The earliest indication of a tendency on the part of the professional actors to put the public performance of plays on a commercial basis, and thus to distinguish their popular exhibitions from the unorganized and casual shows of the tumblers, bearwards, fencers, and minstrels with whom it was usual to class them, appears about 1575 in the erection of the first buildings designed particularly for dramatic entertainment. A sermon preached at Paul's Cross by one Thomas White, December 9, 1576, denounces the "sumptuous theatre houses, a continual monument of London's prodigality and folly," and the distinctive names of the original playhouses, The Theatre and The Curtain, are mentioned both by John Northbrook in his Trea-

[1] Quoted by Collier, Introduction to Northbrook's Treatise, *Shakespeare Society*, 1843, p. vii.

[2] Cf. *Remembrancia*, 55–58.

tise against "Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine playes, or Enterluds, with other idle pastimes," licensed in 1577, and in a sermon delivered by John Stockwood in 1578.[1]

The construction of these edifices, built in close proximity in Shoreditch, just outside the sphere of influence of the hostile London Council, marks an advance in the development of the popular theatre which is more striking on the economic than on the architectural side. The lines followed by the builders were substantially those of the old inn-yard, with its interior balconies, unfloored pavement, and open roof; and only little effort was made, so far as we can ascertain, to emulate the greater sumptuousness and convenience of the indoor private theatre. Thus, the ancient tradition of outdoor representation, the arrangements for placing the various classes of the audience, and all the characteristic devices of stage practice, remained practically unaltered. The building of the Theatre and Curtain is mainly significant, because it proves the great growth in public interest in drama, which the literature of the time everywhere attests, and because it shows on the part of the actors a correspondingly increased attention to the popular exercise of their profession. Henceforth, the performance of plays before the multitude was a business prosecuted, not carelessly and at hap-hazard, but as a permanent career and at the expense of considerable outlay by astute men of affairs like James Burbage, leader of Leicester's company and builder of the

[1] See Collier's Introduction to Northbrook's Treatise, and E. N. S. Thompson, *Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage*, 1903, 103 f.

Theatre. Under these conditions, it was not long before the profits incident to the public staging of plays became so large as to raise to notable affluence a great number of stockholder-actors like Shakespeare, Alleyn, and the younger Burbage, and even to attract the cupidity of speculators originally unconnected with the profession. The best instance of the latter class is, of course, the illiterate but shrewd Philip Henslowe, builder of the third public theatre, the Rose,[1] and long the most energetic rival of Shakespeare in practical matters.

It is not to be supposed that the newer theatres entirely supplanted the inn-yard as the scene of popular dramatic performance at any time during the life of Elizabeth. It was the Cross Keys Inn in Gracechurch Street which in 1589 harbored Lord Strange's Men and thus inaugurated the career, as it would seem, of the greatest of all the London companies, — that of Shakespeare.[2] Such inns continued till after the accession of James I to furnish the regular acting place for smaller companies, and even occasionally to accommodate the greatest and most flourishing, when such accidents as fire, plague, or civic opposition deprived them of more ambitious stages. And, though the regular theatres developed enormously in seating capacity and magnificence after 1590, receiving in some cases gorgeous interior adornment, it was probably long before they produced any essential innovation in method or capability of stage presentation. The practical superiority of Shakespeare's Globe over

[1] The date at which the Rose was first opened as a theatre ranges between 1587 and 1592. Cf. W. W. Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, ii, 44.

[2] *Ibid.*, 72, 73.

the contemporary inn-yard we may assume to have been less a matter of dramatic effectiveness than of size and regular business control.

Nor did the rise of separate theatres succeed in entirely distinguishing play-acting from the other forms of popular entertainment with which it had formerly been associated. Lord Strange's company appears to have had its humble origin in a band of boy tumblers first mentioned as performing at court in 1580.[1] The usual end of declining theatres was employment as the scene for fencing and acrobatic exhibitions; and the prudent Henslowe constructed a building, as late as 1613, which could be used at will for bear-baiting or acting, and which, after having seen the original production of "Bartholomew Fair," was soon given over entirely to the more vulgar amusement.[2]

The details of Elizabethan staging are largely obscure, and probably not wholly susceptible of explanation; but the main principles and the general effects produced are now hardly doubtful. It is likely that the crudities and inconsistencies of presentation have been considerably over-emphasized. Certainly, a good deal of progress in practical stagecraft was made during the last decades of the century, and the absurdities ridiculed by Sidney in 1580 cannot be safely predicated of the theatre of 1600. The stage itself seems to have been of generous size both in the inn-yard and in the regular playhouse. In Henslowe's Fortune — perhaps the largest of the Elizabethan buildings — 43 feet by 40, out of a total ground area

[1] *Henslowe's Diary*, ii, 71.

[2] The "Hope" Theatre. See Greg, *loc. cit.*, 66–68.

of 80 feet square, were set apart for the stage and "tiring-house." [1]

Three divisions of the stage must be recognized: an outer and an inner (or a forward and rear) portion, which might be separated by a curtain, and a balcony raised above the inner stage.[2] The precise position and number of curtains, and the arrangement of the doors leading from the tiring-house behind the stage, are questions in dispute, and perhaps differed in the various theatres. The main use of the balcony was to indicate distance between the speakers. It might represent the walls of a besieged city, a lady's chamber, or the scaffolding of Barabas's caldron.

A great deal of the confusion prevalent in regard to the *mise en scène* of Elizabethan plays is probably due to the failure to discriminate between the practice of the popular theatres and that observed in private performances. In the latter case the stage was ordinarily a temporary platform erected at the end of the hall used for the presentation, and necessarily removed, of course when the hall was restored to its normal function.[3] Thus, till the influence of popular procedure

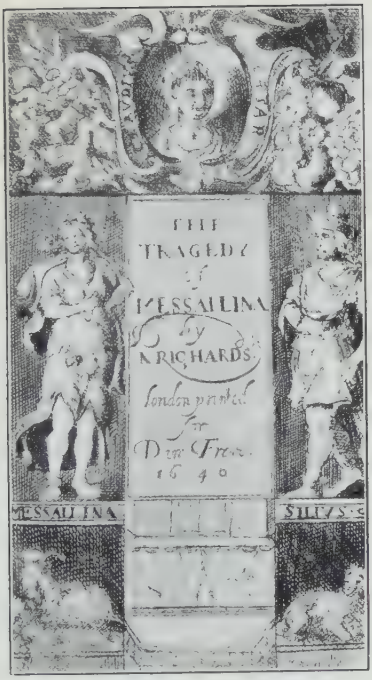
[1] On the shape of the Elizabethan stage, see my article in the New York *Nation*, Dec., 1910.

[2] Probably the best discussion of Elizabethan staging is contained in V. E. Albright's *Shaksperian Stage*, 1909, which supplies also a criticism of the rival dissertations of C. Brodmeier (1904); G. F. Reynolds, 1905; and R. Wegener, 1907. A general survey of the subject and an excellent bibliography will be found in the *Cambridge History of Eng. Lit.*, vi, ch. x.

[3] In illustration of the flimsy nature of the stage architecture in private performances, see the account of the fatal accident which occurred when Edwards's lost *Palemon and Arcite* was acted before Queen Elizabeth in Christ Church hall, Oxford (1566). Nicholls, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, 1823, 210–213.

and the growing tendency to prodigality in indoor theatricals began to prepare the way for the extravagance of Inigo Jones and the other great Stuart architects of the private stage, the court and college dramas seem to have been produced upon a slight elevated flooring concealed by a single curtain or by none. We find, therefore, that the interludes, the early imitations of Latin drama, and the court comedies of Lyly — all intended for indoor performance — either make no effort at visualizing scene, or adhere to the constant Roman practice of a street before several houses, or else resort to such childish devices for indicating change of place as the pushing of Diogenes's tub on and off the stage in full view of the spectators.

These imperfections of the private theatre should not be permitted to obscure one's realization that, by the last decade of the century, the public stage had comparatively satisfactory means of suggesting change of locality, and even of creating dramatic illusion, in the permanent threefold division mentioned above. An invariable practice cannot safely be assumed, but it is highly probable that verisimilitude was obtained to a large degree by a somewhat regular alternation between scenes acted on the outer portion only of the lower stage and scenes in which the inner portion also was exposed. The balcony above could be separately screened when not required, and it might be used in connection with either the outer or the entire lower stage. The inner stage seems often to have been rather elaborately decorated and to have contained a considerable amount of furniture. The outer division, on the other hand, we may imagine to have been totally, or almost totally, bare, and it was probably



TITLE-PAGE OF N. RICHARDS'S
"TRAGEDY OF MESSALLINA," 1640

Acted by the Company of his Majesty's Revels.
With sketch of stage and actors

used for indefinitely located scenes requiring space for relatively few actors. All Elizabethan dramas abound in brief scenes of monologue or casual conversation, in which the chorus, hero or villain, a couple of court gentlemen, or a knot of clowns occupy the attention of the audience in the intervals between weightier scenes involving a great number of figures and demanding clear localization. In many of these cases, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the slighter passage was particularly devised for the purpose of beguiling the time, while behind the drawn intermediate curtain, the rear stage was being decorated.[1] By some such method as this, we may be sure, changes of place were marked without that tedious period of blank expectancy between the scenes which no Elizabethan audience would ever have endured, and which becomes possible even in the modern theatre only when the number of changes is greatly reduced.

It is certain that the Elizabethan popular theatre made use of numerous stage properties and attempted, according to its standards, a considerably more realistic imitation of life than seems often to be imagined. Frank anachronism, of course, must be conceded, both in the dress of the actors and in scenic decoration. Apart, however, from this failure to distinguish between the fashions of the ages, the dramatists and managers were undoubtedly fully aware of the pictorial limitations of their staging, and eager to heighten the illusion of the spectators. Though the bulk of the expense of setting out a play went in purchase of cos-

[1] Cf. *The Puritan*, III, iii, iv. See also A. H. Tolman, "Alternation in the Staging of Shakespeare's Plays," *Mod. Phil.*, vi (1909), 517 ff.

tumes for the performers, Henslowe's lists of expenditures are in themselves sufficient evidence of the attention paid to scenic furnishings; and everything we know of the procedure of the day emphasizes the fallacy of assuming for the theatre of Shakespeare's time a smaller regard for pictorial effect than can be clearly proved for the performances of the mystery cycles two centuries before. Practicable furniture of many kinds — trees that could be climbed or lopped off, hedges and arrases that would really conceal — did undoubtedly exist, and could certainly be replaced by other fittings when change of scene rendered them glaringly out of keeping.

Of scenery in the modern sense there can hardly be a question; but painted cloths may have been used somewhat ambitiously to suggest buildings, or even landscape, — particularly perhaps in connection with the upper balcony stage. The boards hung up to proclaim the scene of action, and occasionally the title of the play as well, were merely the equivalent of the modern theatre programme, and cannot be regarded as in any sense a substitute or alternative for visual scenery.

Altogether, the numerous plays printed directly from the prompter's copies used in the theatres, and such documents as "Henslowe's Diary" and the records of eye-witnesses of performances bear out inherent probability in showing the stage of 1600 to have been unusually plastic and inventive in its solution of the external problems of presentation, and not indifferent — as it has sometimes been held — but sensitive in the highest degree to the real capabilities of stage business and scenic effect.

The external development of the Elizabethan theatre, with which we have just been concerned, was influenced at several points by the course of critical opinion regarding the drama. We have seen how the governmental regulation of player companies, by checking the free evolution of a vulgar democratic stage, kept the popular drama for a time in subjection to the interests of private aristocratic performance, but ended by enriching the former with the heritage of experiment and innovation which the learned writers for the private stage had accumulated. Thus the public theatre of 1590 acquired a breadth of scope and a universal adaptability impossible to a purely indigenous plebeian growth. In addition to this influence of practical policy, two great waves of formal controversy, which came to a head during the reign of Elizabeth, left their mark upon the drama as upon other species of literature.

The first of these forces was the all-embracing tide of Puritan philosophy, which, beginning in a more or less academic and impartial query concerning the justification of ornamental art in general, directed its arraignment not only against the stage, but against practically all poetry and fiction, music, and dancing. This attitude of mind, voiced in its mildest aspect by Ascham, repeats itself in slightly more specialized form in the works of Northbrook and Gosson, — the earliest important antagonists of the theatre, — and finds a response equally catholic and far-reaching in Sidney's noble "Apologie for Poetrie." However, in the heat of the quarrel thus punctiliously opened, attention concentrated itself more and more upon the most concrete object of dispute: the contemporary stage.

The growing force of anti-dramatic prejudice, strong enough from the start to prevent the erection of theatres within the limits of London municipal control and very seriously to hamper even irregular inn-yard performances in the same district, succeeded during the Stuart period in depriving the drama first of its chief right to live, and then, for a space, of all open existence.[1]

The other great critical dispute, only less universal in its issues than that occasioned by the rise of the Puritan attitude, likewise affected the drama at first merely as one of the branches of creative poetry. This controversy, taking its origin from the Renaissance, as the other arose from the Reformation, sought a final permanent settlement for all questions of literary standard and artistic form. The proposition debated was in effect this: Granted once that imaginative literature had a moral claim to existence, should it find its expression in the ever changing patterns evolved from time to time by contemporary taste, or could it discover in classic usage stylistic and structural models of universal application? In a conflict waged thus over the whole field of poetic practice, it is hardly surprising that the opposing lines became sometimes curiously confused. Thus, Spenser and Campion — two of the most graceful expositors of the romantic capabilities of English verse, and both special masters of rhythmic effect — became conspicuous assailants of the "barbarousness" of rime, and defenders of the ungainly and rasping imitations of classic metre. On

[1] It should be remembered, however, that surreptitious dramatic performances were never absolutely abolished during the era of Puritan control.

the other side, Daniel, the most distinguished stickler for classic regularity in the drama, delivered the final decisive blow in defence of the general romantic contention in his eloquent and unanswerable "Defence of Rime."

As far as the theatre was concerned, this dispute tended to resolve itself into an opposition, probably not clearly recognized at first, between the private stage, strongly inclined to classic uniformity and regularity, and the popular drama, which grew increasingly romantic and irregular as it grew more independent. The issue of the controversy can be traced through the previous chapters in the gradual decline of the drama of Latin imitation and the development of the various national, "romantic" types. The period at which the result was decided appears from the fact that Sir Philip Sidney, writing his "Apology for Poetry" about 1580, pronounces strongly — and considering the state of the English theatre at the time, undoubtedly justly — in favor of plays built on classic lines. Ten years later, however, the romantic popular type had so completely outstripped competition that adherence to classic rule continues to show itself only in dramatic freaks and "sports," like the effusions of the Countess of Pembroke's school, or in unsuccessful efforts at compromise between the two methods such as Jonson's Roman tragedies.

Thus the purely literary controversy between classicism and romanticism settled itself within the limits of time to which our study has been restricted with as much finality as such critical uncertainties can ever reach. The other broader issue, involved in the Puritan hostility to the stage, was protracted far into the

Stuart period, and any proper understanding of its vital consequences requires a careful review of the general progress of pre-Restoration drama in England. Such a review will perhaps make clear also the essential nature of the Elizabethan drama and the fundamental differences which distinguish it from that of the succeeding age.

The late Mr. J. A. Symonds has written a well-known essay [1] "On the Drama of Elizabeth and James considered as the main product of the Renaissance in England." The dependence of the Elizabethan drama on the Renaissance is, of course, a commonplace everywhere acknowledged and so oft reiterated that it has almost ceased to appear a commonplace, and has come to be accepted as an article of unreasoning faith. To recognize the connection, however, is to do little more than admit that a great imaginative upheaval has produced great imaginative results. We are little nearer than before to the answer to the question of real importance; namely, just what these results were, and exactly in what manner they were displayed.

That strange literary product, the drama of the Tudor and Jacobean age, can best be likened, perhaps, by a rather homely comparison, to the seed-pod of some leguminous plant. Starting from the slender promise of the stem, it grows with a fecundity beyond explanation, through imperfect or stunted products to the large girth and richness of the centre. Then, as if the life-giving power were gradually withdrawn, it becomes ever narrower and more restricted, till it ends in sheer abortion. Those who attempt the

[1] Printed as General Introduction to the *Mermaid* edition of Marlowe.

study of such an organism from a cross section through the middle — as is commonly the method in literature — are confounded by the number, the variety, and the mutual unlikeness of the cells. It is better that one endeavor first to discover the few genital elements whose presence creates all the diverse manifestations of maturity, and whose absence transforms maturity into decay.

That some such causes exist for the brilliant bloom of Elizabethan drama and its subsequent degeneration admits of no doubt. The accident of individual genius by no means accounts sufficiently for the phenomena. But we shall probably never be able to lay these causes completely bare, and to estimate the precise importance of each. There appear, however, two considerations, which, if they did not completely control the progress of pre-Restoration drama, are at least closely correlated with its rise, flourishing, and decline. They are: first, the relation of the drama at different stages to religious feeling; and, second, its relation to the personal life and the political views of its age.

From the time of the English Renaissance — about the time, let us say, of Skelton's "Magnificence" — to the period of Elizabeth's accession, the drama had been gradually working itself away from the religious tendencies of mediævalism and in the direction of vulgar comedy. The movement was quite natural, and its first beginnings long antedate the period I have mentioned. It was not carried out, however, entirely without a check, because the English Reformation and the theological disputes it engendered gave to religion for a time a particular dramatic interest. Thus,

we find a kind of recrudescence of the clerical element in the work of the Protestant zealot, Bishop Bale, and the authors of "New Custom" and "King Darius," and in the strongly anti-reformatory play of "Respublica." These controversial pieces, however, stand by themselves, and perhaps had but little influence on general taste and procedure. By the time the real Elizabethan drama was inaugurated in the earliest works of Peele, Kyd, and Marlowe, the stage had completely enfranchised itself from definitely ecclesiastical tendencies.

In general, the drama would appear to have maintained a position of neutrality on the subject of religion, though certainly not without occasional lapses into polemics, from about 1585 till the death of Elizabeth. The greatest and sanest work of this period stands free, as it ought to do, both of religious coloring and of theological dispute. But already a strong reflex movement had begun. No sooner had the theatre emancipated itself from vassalage to the ancient church than it was threatened with total annihilation by the newborn forces of Puritanism. The Puritan attack had begun, as has been seen, very early in Elizabeth's reign, and it manifested itself in at least two ways: in constant opposition to theatres and things theatrical on the part of the representatives of middle-class respectability; and in formal public denunciations like Northbrook's Treatise and Stephen Gosson's "School of Abuse," published as early as 1577 and 1579 respectively. Of such pamphlets there was indeed no end; they increased in virulence and in number as the century declined and the next century began. Among the host may be mentioned Thomas

Beard's "Theatre of God's Judgments," 1598, which after passing through several editions, was recast by another hand and brought out under a title savoring no less than the first of sulphur and brimstone, "The Theatre of God's Judgments" being heightened into "The Thunderbolt of God's Wrath." Another expression of the same attitude is William Vaughan's "Golden Grove," first printed in 1600 and reëdited in 1608. The sixty-sixth chapter of the second edition of this work proposes the question, "Whether Stage playes ought to be suffred in a Common-wealth," and proceeds to answer it most emphatically in the negative.

For a time, as we have said, the greater Elizabethan dramatists held their course, unaffected by the Puritan onslaughts; but this could not long continue to be the case. Players and playwrights, having had the position of pariahs forced upon them, gradually accommodated their lives and writings to the character. Offences originally casual became conscious and disproportioned. What had been no more than the necessary dark shading in the picture of actual life was dwelt upon till the whole effect grew morbid and ugly. There can be no doubt that the blame for this rests rather with Puritanism than with the drama. It was quite impossible for the latter long to ignore the hue and cry that was raised against it, and submission to Puritan dictation meant nothing short of absolute extinction. There was no choice but avowed hostility. The gauntlet so often thrown down by the opposite party must at length be taken up, though by that act the drama sealed its doom. Henceforth, its two chief elements of greatness were vanished. From being the

voice of a great nation undivided, it must descend to the place of mouthpiece to a particular faction; and with its representative character it lost also its impartiality of vision. It could no longer depict life as life really was: the poison spot of anti-Puritan bitterness soon spread so as to infect the whole body and sour its whole judgment of men and manners.

The year in which Elizabeth died — 1603 — is in a number of ways a convenient landmark in the progress of dramatic history. It is about this time that the drama begins to grow conscious of the break with the forces of religion and morality. Already in Shakespeare's later work there are uneasy allusions to Brownists and Precisians. In plays like "Eastward Hoe" (1605), "The Puritan" (1607), and "Bartholomew Fair" (1614), the antagonism is acknowledged, but it is not yet too bitter to furnish matter for jest. Ridicule, however, even in the skilful hands of Ben Jonson and Marston, collapsed like a wall of sand before the advancing tide of Puritanism. The generation which began with the production of "Measure for Measure" and "Eastward Hoe" saw the drama slowly driven from its position. Little by little, the ground of sober reason and reality crumbled under its feet, till it slipped almost unawares into the bog of motiveless ribaldry. During the last phase — to speak roughly, during the Caroline epoch — English drama is no longer what it had successively been, either the coadjutor, or the compeer, or the jealous rival, or the desperate assailant of Religion. It has forfeited all claim to consideration as a moral and ethical force, has accepted the brand of vagabondage, and is content to make its appeal to moral outcasts.

It was for this reason that Stuart drama faded and decayed, rather than from any of the more usual causes of literary decline. The interesting and on many accounts marvellously attractive work of that period — the work of Fletcher and Middleton, Massinger and Shirley — displays assuredly no lack of imaginative brilliance or poetic beauty. In richness of coloring and skill of plot construction it rivals the highest achievement of the true Elizabethans. The form is there in almost undiminished splendor; it is the healthy spirit, the sane and comprehensive grasp of life, which is missing. Something of this sort is what Professor Dowden means by the following paragraph from his book, "Puritan and Anglican":[1] —

"The chief glory of Elizabethan literature was the drama, with the deepest passion and the most heroic actions of humanity for its theme. It had its basis in what is most real in the life of man, and what is real was interpreted into the highest meanings by imagination. During the latter years of the reign of James I and during the reign of Charles the drama lost touch with reality; it was cut off from its true basis of supply. It advanced with a showy gallantry, but its strength and solidity of movement were gone. It relied too often, as with Massinger and Fletcher, on overstrained, fantastic motives. It deserted the substantial ground of national history. It endeavoured to excite a jaded imagination with extravagances of romantic passion or even of unnatural lust. It sought for curiosities of prettiness in sentiment and imagery. It supported its decline by splendors appealing to the senses; vast sums

[1] Pages 2, 3.

of money were expended upon the masque. It grew shallow in true passion and meditative wisdom. It grew rhetorical; its moralities are often those of eloquent periods. And if at times less rudely gross than the earlier drama, it was infected with a subtler and a baser spirit of evil."

The words quoted, like much of what has just been said in discussing the attitude of the drama toward moral tendencies, have an application which extends far beyond the limits of religion or of ethics. During the age of which we are treating, dramatic literature and established religion were infinitely more than the narrowly defined and essentially unrelated phenomena they are at present. Each had potentially, at least, if not in actuality, a scope so enormous as to include within itself the entire social, political, and intellectual import of the national life: and that would probably be no very distorted conception of history which should regard the Elizabethan impulse toward dramatic self-expression and the great Puritan movement as the protagonists in a struggle, where the prize of victory was nothing less than the power of shaping the ideals and interests of the English people.

The discussion, therefore, of the gradual overthrow of the Elizabethan drama as an ethical force links itself naturally with what I have referred to as the second great cause of the drama's decline: its gradual divorce from the serious concerns of contemporary life. The gain of Puritanism was here also the loss of the drama; and the latter was deprived of its very blood and brawn when the spirit of the age came to be expressed no longer through it, but through the literary work of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Milton,

and the political personalities of Hampden, Selden, and Cromwell.

During the interval between 1603 and 1642 the drama underwent a sort of desiccation; it lost its sap and freshness. The milk of human kindness and catholic sympathy, which keeps the work of Elizabeth's reign sweet in spite of all its outspoken coarseness, was soured first into cynicism and at length completely evaporated, leaving nothing behind but a dried and hollow shell. The first stage of the change is found in the plays of Webster, Tourneur, and Ford. Here is as yet no coldness or lack of vitality, surely; but the warmth is that of fever rather than health. The connection with genuine English life and feeling has been broken, once for all. Neither in the individual characters nor in the general spirit which informs such plays as "Vittoria Corombona," "The Revenger's Tragedy," and "The Broken Heart," is there much suggestion of the real seventeenth-century England. Throughout, one finds the stale and acrid flavor of decadent Italianism, consciously imported and morbidly emphasized. In its general tendencies, indeed, and in its fundamental character, this school of drama is no longer English; it is "Italianate" in the full derogatory sense in which Roger Ascham employs the term,[1] and to a much more harmful degree than any literary force of Ascham's day could possibly have been.

The fierce flame of unnatural passion which lends heat and brilliance to the plays of Webster and Ford was necessarily short-lived: it was but the last wild

[1] See *The Scholemaster*, ed. Arber, *English Reprints*, 1870, 77–81.

guttering that preceded extinction, and it consumed in its sudden blaze the final remnants of dramatic fuel. By its ignoring of the ordinary human interests, Jacobean tragedy had already squandered the principal resource upon which its continuance depended. After Ford, there was no psychological abnormity, no imaginable depth of misery or excess of half-crazed passion, which could stimulate any longer dramatic attention. We have the inevitable result in much of the work of Glapthorne and Shirley. The drama is but a polished crust, void of psychical interest and philosophic import. It has but two dimensions: there is no depth to it. If we attempt to probe the hearts of the characters, to search beneath the cut and thrust of the dialogue and the orderly procession of incident for the organic life that inspires the whole, we find little but dead dust and putrefaction.

The main cause, therefore, why the English drama of the reigns of James I and Charles I steadily declined, and finally came near to death, is not to be discovered in the hostility of the law-makers or the disturbances of civil war, though these forces, naturally, contributed in some measure. The main reason is the fact that the Stuart drama came by successive stages, the first of which dates from very early in the reign of James, to represent almost the complete negation of those qualities of nationalism and responsiveness to the waves of popular feeling, which gave the drama of Elizabeth its exuberant vigor and its wonderful complexity.

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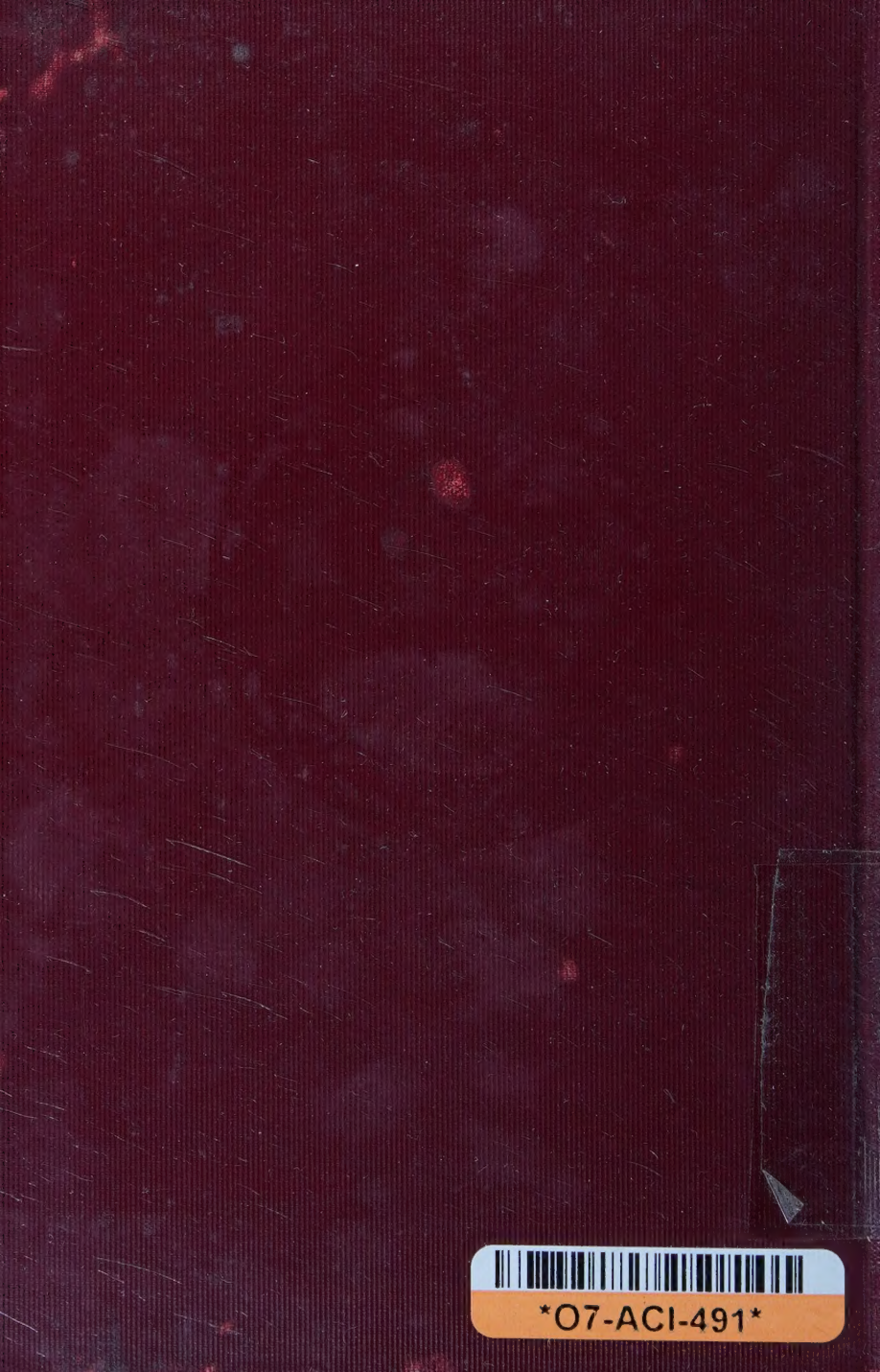
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